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DRAGON®

A Dungeons & Dragons® Roleplaying Game Supplement

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D&D INSIDER Exclusive Content

Exclusively Yours

It's good to be loved

It's an exciting time for *D&D Insider*. Last month, Bill revealed that we were releasing the revenant -- a new PC race -- in June's issue of *Dragon*. This was our first, true *D&D Insider* exclusive. The thing is, we didn't really explain what "exclusive" means. In terms of our content release plan, "exclusive" means it won't be appearing anywhere else.

But what does "anywhere else" mean exactly? Sometimes, we get so excited about an announcement that we just make the assumption you're right there with us. Allow me to clear up any confusion.

Question #1: Does "exclusive" mean the revenant will not appear in a future print product?

Answer: Yes, that's correct. The revenant will only appear as part of *D&D Insider*. We're not planning to pick up the mechanical elements of the race for any print product. The revenant article (and the compiled issue containing that article) will be the only places you'll find this content. However, that does not mean a print adventure might not feature a revenant villain or that a novel won't feature a revenant character down the line, hypothetically speaking.

Question #2: Will content that appears as a *D&D Insider* exclusive ever have additional support?

Answer: Yes, and support articles will likewise be exclusive to *D&D Insider*. You won't see revenant feats or paragon paths, for example, appear down the road in a print product. We already have plans in the works for an article this fall that features new revenant racial feats, and we'll treat the revenant like any other race in the game. As an article warrants, we'll provide revenants with new character options.

So we've covered our approach for support for the revenant and, I hope, allayed fears about the plans for exclusive content as a whole. But what about the assassin? For starters, everything I said about the revenant above is also true of new classes exclusive to *D&D Insider*. Plus, we have an ambitious support plan for the assassin. Since we know there won't be new assassin powers appearing in a power source supplement or *Player's Handbook*, we're already planning to support September's two complete builds with more support just a few months after. Plus, early next year, we plan to introduce a third assassin build. Once the assassin is out and about, we'll also be accepting new submissions for the class -- new class-focused articles, new Class Acts, and so on.

Finally, we've noticed a number of conversations about the necessity or value of the assassin class to a game that already features a strong rogue option. I've now seen the assassin first hand, and let me tell you: this is no rogue. The assassin plays, looks, and just fundamentally feels different from any other class in the game. We try to avoid introducing a class that steps on the toes of another or, worse, makes a party experience untenable (assassins don't need to be evil). The shadow power source opens up new play options for future design, and you'll soon see for yourself how the assassin taps into these concepts. The class is inextricably linked to shadow magic. I'm so stoked about the new class that I actually started plotting my character's demise, just so I could roll up my next character: a revenant assassin.

Now that you know the shadow power source is on its way, what other classes or races do you think fit that concept? And what's your vision of the perfect assassin?

Send your feedback to dndinsider@wizards.com!

Debut Content
Player's Handbook 3

The Psion

Mechanical Design by Bruce R. Cordell

Commentary by Andy Collins, Bruce R. Cordell, Mike Mearls, and Stephen Schubert

illustrations by Cyril van der Haegan and Christine MacTernan

Welcome to the first official debut article featuring content drawn from *Player's Handbook*® *3*.

Most of the world must wait until March 2010 to learn the secrets of the psion class. As an Insider, however, you can start playing a psion today . . . eight whole months before the book hits the shelves!

But we're not stopping with a single class: Over the next several months, Insiders like you will see over 100 pages of debut content taken from *Player's Handbook* 3. Next month it's the githzerai race (including a racial paragon path and several racial feats), and then we're on to more class, race, and feat debuts until February of 2010.

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This article—and future debut articles—follow a different format from those you're used to seeing on Dungeons & Dragons® *Insider*. Rather than simply presenting entire sections of text verbatim, we've blended book content with commentary from the designers, developers, and editors who worked on it. Think of these entries as the commentary tracks for your debut content.

For this article, we have commentary from *Player's Handbook* 3 Lead Designer Mike Mearls, *Player's Handbook* 3 co-designer (and all-around psionic guru) Bruce Cordell, *Player's Handbook* 3 Lead Developer Stephen Schubert, and Andy Collins, manager of D&D® development and editing (and part of the *Player's Handbook* 3 development team).

Purely mechanical items, such as powers and feats, appear only as list items accompanied by brief descriptions and/or flavor text; the mechanics of these items appear in the D&D Character Builder and D&D Compendium.

Let us know what you think of this article, and how we can make future debut articles more informative and entertaining by sending feedback to dnd-insider@wizards.com.

PSION

"I can bend the desires of mortals and immortals to my will."

CLASS TRAITS

Role: Controller. You can mentally influence the actions of your foes, and you can toss your enemies around the battlefield with psionic force.
Power Source: Psionic. You direct psionic energy from within your own mind, focusing that power through meditation and contemplation. Your magic works on the minds of others or manifests your will as a physical force in the world.

Key Abilities: Intelligence, Charisma, Wisdom

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, simple ranged
Implements: Orbs, staffs
Bonus to Defense: +2 Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 12 + Constitution score
Hit Points per Level Gained: 4
Healing Surges per Day: 6 + Constitution modifier
Trained Skills: From the class skills list below, choose four trained skills at 1st level.

Class Skills: Arcana (Int), Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Dungeoneering (Wis), History (Int), Insight (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Perception (Wis)

Class Features: Discipline Focus, Psionic Augmentation, Ritual Casting

COMMENTARY

Andy Collins: The psion entered our discussion of classes way back in the early days of 4th Edition design. A theoretical "telepath" class shows up in an internal document entitled "Building a Party" dated June 3, 2005—only a few weeks after concepting for the new edition began—as an example of a potential controller. We knew even then that the psionic power source was unlikely to appear in the initial *Player's Handbook*, but we realized that we had to think early about where the game was going after 2008.

Mike Mearls: This role decision was perhaps the easiest part of the class's design. The most traditional and iconic manifestations of psionic powers in D&D and lore match up perfectly with the controller role. Whether your psion controls the minds of your foes—like the telepathic psion detailed in this article—or psychically slides them around as if they were toys (using the second build, which you'll see in *Player's Handbook* 3), you're acting exactly like a controller.

Andy: While the psion is the second class we've shown that uses the psionic power source—the monk, appearing in playtest form in *Dragon* #375, was the first—this is the first class to embrace a key new mechanic shared by most psionic classes slated to appear in the game: psionic augmentation.

This system, described in more detail below, allows a psion great flexibility in determining the precise effect of his or her powers. This is a throwback to previous editions of D&D, but the new system addresses the shortcomings of a purely point-based power system as you'll see below.

Bruce Cordell: We wanted the psion to have class skills that befit the class's story concept as a practitioner of esoteric skill and also demonstrate their talents of discernment. These skills also complement the psion's primary ability scores.

Psions are the quintessential manipulators of psionic power. Psions unleash the potential locked within every conscious mind, move objects with just a thought, and assume command of even the least desire of their foes. Psions manifest their secret wishes when others can only dream about them.

You know the mental pathways that lead to amazing edifices of altered reality. You could be a brash human youth flush with your mental ability's first flowering, a tattooed cenobite enrolled in a secret psionic academy, a fey enchanter using ancient techniques to beguile your foes, or perhaps a specially trained inquisitor who has learned one secret too many.

A flare of mental energy warms you, the thoughts of friends and foes glitter like stars all about you, and your thoughts themselves are weapons half sheathed. If a god can reshape the world and you can enthrall a god, what does that make you?

Psion Class Features

Psions have the following class features.

Discipline Focus

Psions focus their studies and meditations toward perfecting or understanding a particular concept or manifestation of psionic power. You choose a Discipline Focus, one of which is presented here.

Telepathy Focus: You gain the powers *distract* and *send thoughts*.

Psionic Augmentation

Through discipline and careful study, you have mastered a form of psionic magic that offers greater versatility than other characters command. You know a broad array of at-will attack powers, each of which is a channel through which you can pour as much or as little psionic energy as you choose. You channel psionic energy into a reservoir of personal power, represented in the game as power points, that you can use to augment your at-will attack powers, replacing the encounter attack powers that other characters use and giving you greater flexibility in combat.

As a psion, you acquire and use powers in a slightly different manner from other classes. You do not gain encounter attack powers. Instead, you gain at-will attack powers that can be augmented by spending power points.

At-Will Attack Powers: At 1st level, you choose two at-will attack powers and one daily attack power from your class, but you don't start with any encounter attack powers from your class. You can instead augment your psion at-will attack powers using power points. These powers (and certain others, notably the encounter attack power you gain from a psion paragon path) have the augmentable keyword, which is defined in the sidebar on page 8.

You gain new psion at-will attack powers, instead of new encounter attack powers, as you increase in level. At 3rd level, you choose a new psion at-will attack power. At 7th, 13th, 17th, 23rd, and 27th level, you can replace one of your augmentable psion at-will attack powers with another one of your level or lower. The power you replace must have augmentations.

Power Points: You start with 2 power points. You gain 2 additional power points at 3rd and 7th level, 1 additional power point at 13th level, and 2 additional power points at 17th, 21st, 23rd, and 27th level. If you gain power points from another source (such as your paragon path), add them to your power point pool. You can use your power points to augment any

COMMENTARY

Bruce: This class draws its primary inspiration from the class of the same name that appeared in the 3rd Edition Dungeons & Dragons game, which in turn was based on a mixture of real-world "psychic" talents and fictional representations of people with mental talents. The previous version of the psion had six flavors (think "builds") of psionic power, but for *Player's Handbook 3*, we chose to focus on just the two most iconic builds of mental abilities. The first, telepathy, debuts here; the second, which focuses on force-based effects, will appear in *Player's Handbook 3*.

Andy: These two powers appear in the D&D Character Builder. The first draws the attention of an enemy at a key moment, while the second allows short-range telepathic communication. (If you're thinking that the telepathic psion makes a great addition to your stealthy strike team, you'd be correct.)

Mike: We've found that, in play, the wizard's cantrips are a great way to get across the power he or she wields outside of combat. Spells like *mage hand* are useful in a variety of situations, and they really highlight that you're dealing with a character who doesn't just use arcane magic, he or she *commands* it.

For the psion, we wanted to do something similar. Psions don't just use psionic magic in combat. They master a number of subtle abilities used as part of their daily lives. Some of these manifest as the Discipline Focus.

COMMENTARY

Stephen Schubert: Here's the gist of that long entry:

- As a psion, you don't have encounter attack powers.
- During each encounter, you use power points to augment one or more of your at-will powers, increasing their potency.
- If you use your power points to maximum efficiency, your output during any given encounter—damage, control, and so on—will approximately equal that of any other character.
- Alternatively, you can spread your points over more powers. This reduces your damage output, but gives you lots of useful tricks during the fight.

Mike: We went with power points for two reasons. First, points were the "fuel" of psionics in 3rd Edition D&D. They provided an alternative magic system, and we wanted to hit on the same compelling features that made psionics popular before.

Second, we wanted to push the game in a new direction. Our design for *Player's Handbook* 2 mostly stayed within the typical bounds of the *Player's Handbook*. With *Player's Handbook* 3 due for release almost two years after the first *Player's Handbook*, we thought it would be time to show people something really different. We don't plan on making every *Player's Handbook* feature a completely new take on powers, but we want to keep that door open.

Andy: The key difference between the power point mechanic in 4th Edition and that used in 3rd Edition is that the new class doesn't entirely rely on power points as the resource dictating when powers become unavailable for the day. Whereas the 3rd Edition psion's power points were a daily resource—when they're gone, the class couldn't use any more powers that day—the new psion's power points are a per-encounter resource.

augmentable power you have, regardless of how you gained the power.

You regain all your power points when you take a short or an extended rest.

Level	At-Will Attack Powers	Power Points
1	Choose two	Gain 2
3	Choose one	Gain 2 (4 total)
7	Replace one	Gain 2 (6 total)
13	Replace one	Gain 1 (7 total)
17	Replace one	Gain 2 (9 total)
21	—	Gain 2 (11 total)
23	Replace one	Gain 2 (13 total)
27	Replace one	Gain 2 (15 total)

Running out of power points now is no more limiting to the psion than another character exhausting his or her encounter powers: the psion can still use unaugmented at-will powers or turn to daily powers until the encounter ends.

Look for more discussion of the new power point mechanic in an upcoming Design & Development article on the psionic power source.

The Augmentable Keyword

A power that has the augmentable keyword has optional augmentations, which you can use at the cost of power points. An augmentable power follows these rules, unless the power's description says otherwise.

Decide First: You must decide whether and how to augment an augmentable power when you choose to use the power, before you make any attack rolls or apply any of the power's effects.

Power Point Cost: An augmentation specifies its cost in power points. You must spend the required power points when you decide to use the augmentation.

One at a Time: You can use only one augmentation on a power at a time, so you can't, for example, spend 3 power points to use both a 1-point and a 2-point augmentation on a single power.

Replace Base Effects: When you augment a power, any change to the power is noted in the augmentation and replaces specific entries in the base power. An augmented version of a power is otherwise identical to the base power.

Unaugmented: When you use an augmentable power without augmenting it, the power is referred to as unaugmented for that use (some effects apply only when a power is unaugmented). A power that doesn't have the augmentable keyword is never considered unaugmented.

At-Will Attack Powers: When a power or some other effect lets you use an at-will attack power, you can choose to use one of your augmentable at-will attack powers, but you must use it unaugmented.

When a racial trait grants you an at-will attack power of your choice and you choose an augmentable at-will attack power, the power loses its augmentations. However, the power does not lose the augmentable keyword. This means the power is unaugmented when you use it, unless you augment it by some other means.

Ritual Casting

You gain the Ritual Caster feat as a bonus feat, allowing you to use magical rituals (see Chapter 10 of the *Player's Handbook*). You own a ritual book, and it contains a 1st-level ritual of your choice.

Choose either Sending or Tenser's Floating Disk. Your book also contains that ritual, which you can use without expending components once per day.

Implements

Psions employ orbs and staffs to focus their psionic energy into their powers. When you wield a magic orb or staff, you can add its enhancement bonus to the attack rolls and the damage rolls of psion powers and psion paragon path powers that have the implement keyword. Without an implement, you can still use these powers.

Creating a Psion

All psions rely on Intelligence. Psions also benefit from a high Charisma or Wisdom, depending on which expression of the class they favor. Psions often choose feats, skills, and powers to complement the ability score related to their choice of focus.

Telepathic Psion

As a telepathic psion, you focus on influencing your enemies' minds. You choose powers that persuade foes to mistake friend for foe, that crush minds in your psychic grip, and that take control of an enemy's will. Your attack powers use Intelligence; make it your highest ability score. Powers tailored for your build often use Charisma, so it should be your second-best score. Select powers that help you control

COMMENTARY

Mike: When we create a new class, we try make it look and feel different from others. Part of that process comes down to armor, weapons, and implements. Armor choice, of course, also has a mechanical element, since it has a direct effect on AC. Weapons and implements are also a mechanical feature, but they don't have quite as big an impact on how a class plays. We see it as a method to make a class feel a bit different, but we also have to balance it against making sure that a PC of a new class has enough options for magical implements.

Andy: The orb implement provides a nice throwback to the crystal-themed psions from previous editions of D&D. Your psion's orb doesn't have to be a perfect sphere—maybe it's a beautifully faceted crystal that provides a conduit for your psionic power.

Stephen: At one point during the evolution of the class, we considered something like "circlet" as a new implement option.

Mike: That's true. Ultimately, we decided not to create a new implement because we felt we'd be reinventing the wheel. There was no clear, mechanical push for a new implement, so we simply focused on the existing implements that provided the best match for a controller.

Mike: We thought a bit about how best to express the psion via ability scores. A Charisma-based psion would have been more of a raw conduit of power, a mind that might lack discipline but makes up for it with raw strength. In the end, Intelligence provided a better feel. Psions are more like Vulcans, clinical and intellectual, than like Klingons, forceful and instinctual. In D&D terms, going with Intelligence also provided a better match with races that seemed like they should excel at the class, such as eladrin, devas, and githyanki.

your enemies and make the best use of your high Intelligence and Charisma scores.

Suggested Class Feature: Telepathy Focus

Suggested Feat: Precise Mind

Suggested Skills: Arcana, Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight

Suggested At-Will Powers: *memory hole*, *mind thrust*

Suggested Daily Power: *mental trauma*

Player's Handbook 3 will contain tips on creating the second build of the psion as well.

Psion Powers

Your psionic powers are called disciplines. You tap into your mental reservoir to affect the world around you and your enemies' perception of it.

These powers often target a foe's Will defense (as befits the mental theme of the build).

Psychic damage is prevalent. Many of the powers appearing below daze, dominate, or stun their targets; by contrast, few telepathic-build powers immobilize, slow, or knock prone. A small but notable subset of powers causes the target to attack its ally (essentially a minor form of domination).

The telepathic psion's utility powers tend to favor personal defense (*intellect fortress*, *mind shadow*, *mind over flesh*). If you enjoy helping your allies, though, utility disciplines such as *skill empowerment* or *psychic chirurgery* may be up your alley.

The full text of these powers appears in the D&D Character Builder and the D&D Compendium.

COMMENTARY

Andy: The powers and feat listed here all appear in the D&D Character Builder and D&D Compendium.

Andy: You might notice that we avoided including many overtly anachronistic power names. Unlike previous versions of psionic powers, we want these powers to sound fantastic, not scientific.

Stephen: The telepathic psion's powers share a number of common mechanical themes.

As a controller, the psion focuses on ranged and area attacks. However, the class also has a few close blast attacks reminiscent of the mind flayer's *mind blast* power.

Psion Overview

Characteristics: Brandishing the might of your mind, you unleash psionic powers against your foes. Your powers allow you to manipulate a foe's mind with telepathic commands and scatter a group of enemies with telekinetic bursts. You can augment your at-will powers by spending power points, providing you more options than nearly any other class.

Religion: Ioun, the god of knowledge, is often considered the patron of psionic magic, and many psions worship her. Telepathic psions who live by tricking their foes often follow Sehanine, and psions who view the practice of psionic magic as an art form pray to Corellon. Other psions choose deities based on ideals beyond their choice of class: Psions who believe fiercely in justice worship Bahamut, and those who seek to expand the power of civilization worship Erathis, for example. Evil psions (and a few unaligned ones as well) often worship Vecna, the god of secrets.

Races: Psionic power is most prevalent among humans, who are quick to exploit even a hint of latent psionic talent. However, many fey adventurers use psionics to beguile and bewilder their enemies, and both gnomes and eladrin are commonly telepathic psions. Tieflings, perhaps as an expression of their diabolic heritage, also enjoy manipulating the minds of their foes.

Level 1 At-Will Disciplines

Dishearten — Psion Attack 1

You insert thoughts of defeat into your foes' minds, sapping their will to fight.

Compendium entry

Memory Hole — Psion Attack 1

You sift through your foe's mind for the mental representation of yourself within it and brutally rip it out.

Compendium entry

Mind Thrust — Psion Attack 1

You unleash a psychic assault on your foe's mental pathways. You can increase the assault's intensity to weaken your foe's defenses.

Compendium entry

Level 1 Daily Disciplines

Mental Trauma — Psion Attack 1

You assault your enemy with a psychic bolt, impairing its ability to withstand further assaults on its mind.

Compendium entry

Ravening Thought — Psion Attack 1

You craft an insidious idea barbed with contradictions and horrors and project it into the mind of your foe. The thought then tries to invade other foes' minds.

Compendium entry

Level 2 Utility Disciplines

Intellect Fortress — Psion Utility 2

A shimmering fortress of mind-generated force springs into being, deflecting certain attacks.

Compendium entry

Skill Empowerment — Psion Utility 2

You send currents of energy into your ally's mind and body, empowering your comrade to achieve exceptional deeds.

Compendium entry

Level 3 At-Will Disciplines

Betrayal — Psion Attack 3

You weaken your foe's sense of self and force it to betray a comrade.

Compendium entry

Id Insinuation — Psion Attack 3

You send tendrils of thought burrowing into your foes' minds, compromising their resilience. By increasing the size of the tendrils, you can make your foes more susceptible to harm.

Compendium entry

Level 5 Daily Disciplines

Crisis of Identity — Psion Attack 5

You pull on the invisible threads of your foe's self-knowledge, scrambling its mind and confusing its alliances.

Compendium entry

Hypnotic Pulse — Psion Attack 5

You emanate a hypnotic ripple of psychic influence among your foes.

Compendium entry

Level 6 Utility Disciplines

Mind Shadow — Psion Utility 6

Your enemies' ability to pay attention to you fades. You recede to the edge of their vision as nothing but a blurred shadow.

Compendium entry

Steadfast Stanchion — Psion Utility 6

You clamp invisible wedges of force onto space itself, tethering yourself and your allies against forced movement.

Compendium entry

Level 7 At-Will Disciplines

Force Grasp — Psion Attack 7

You grasp your foe with a hand of shimmering force, slowing it. You can hold the foe in place if you infuse the hand with enough power.

Compendium entry

Mind Break — Psion Attack 7

You lance your foe's mind with mental trauma, which makes it vulnerable to psychic damage. If you choose, you can strip away its psychic resistances.

Compendium entry

Level 9 Daily Disciplines

Mind Blast — **Psion Attack 9**

You blast your foes with a torrent of psychic energy, which sends shock waves through the air like heat waves off desert sand.

Compendium entry

Sensory Onslaught — **Psion Attack 9**

You overload your foe's senses with a blaring, flashing, odoriferous mental onslaught that only it can perceive.

Compendium entry

Level 10 Utility Disciplines

Intellect Leech — **Psion Utility 10**

You force a short-range telepathic connection on your foe. Every time your enemy's mind is damaged, you draw invigorating energy from it.

Compendium entry

Mind over Flesh — **Psion Utility 10**

You draw on your reservoir of psionic power to bolster yourself against a debilitating effect.

Compendium entry

Level 13 At-Will Disciplines

Dual Hallucination — **Psion Attack 13**

You pull disquieting images from your foes' minds and combine the images into horrific hallucinations, which you use to disorient those foes.

Compendium entry

Mind Wipe — **Psion Attack 13**

You fray your foe's offensive abilities with a psychic lance of disruption.

Compendium entry

Level 15 Daily Disciplines

Dominate — **Psion Attack 15**

A silvery ray of psychic compulsion lances into your foe's innermost thoughts, dazing it long enough for you to assume control of its actions.

Compendium entry

Psychofeedback — **Psion Attack 15**

You sever one of your foe's mental pathways, causing searing pain. You can exploit that mental wound whenever the foe harms your friends, renewing your own vitality.

Compendium entry

Level 16 Utility Disciplines

Precognitive Step — **Psion Utility 16**

You can see the shades of things to come a heartbeat before they occur, granting you a sliver of time in which to alter events.

Compendium entry

Psychic Chirurgery — **Psion Utility 16**

You send a charge of psionic energy into yourself or an ally, delaying an adverse effect.

Compendium entry

Level 17 At-Will Disciplines

Forced Opportunity — **Psion Attack 17**

You jolt your foe's psyche, disrupting its concentration and allowing an ally to strike the foe during the lapse. By channeling more psionic energy, you can create an opening for several allies to exploit.

Compendium entry

Psychic Brand — **Psion Attack 17**

You manifest a glowing symbol over your enemy's head. The symbol moves with your foe, helping reveal its location. At your choosing, the symbol can intensify your foe's pain.

Compendium entry

Level 19 Daily Disciplines

Psychic Crush — **Psion Attack 19**

You crush some of your enemies' mental processes. The enemies' bodies spasm with the pain that lingers.

Compendium entry

Psychic Leech — **Psion Attack 19**

You plunge a thread of command into your foe's mind, forcing the foe to turn on its ally. You draw psionic power from your foe, and you gain vitality if the foe hits its companion.

Compendium entry

Level 22 Utility Disciplines

Mind Over Earth — **Psion Utility 22**

The ground falls away as you effortlessly propel yourself upward.

Compendium entry

Rejuvenate the Mind — **Psion Utility 22**

When you catch your breath, you experience a rush of psionic vigor.

Compendium entry

Level 23 At-Will Disciplines

Daggers of Pain — **Psion Attack 23**

You send shards of psychic aggression ripping through your enemies, scarring their minds. When those foes move, you can intensify the pain.

Compendium entry

Sudden Control — **Psion Attack 23**

With a thought, you force your foe to attack one of its companions. With greater concentration, your control becomes absolute.

Compendium entry

Level 25 Daily Disciplines

Mind Switch — **Psion Attack 25**

You project a fragment of your consciousness into your enemy's mind, disorienting the enemy and creating a temporary clone of your will within it that you can use to channel your magic.

Compendium entry

Thrall — **Psion Attack 25**

Psychic energy pierces your foe's sense of self, distracting the foe so that you can assume control of its actions.

Compendium entry

Level 27 At-Will Disciplines

Concussive Detonation — **Psion Attack 27**

You unleash a blast of force, which tears into your foes, leaving them off balance. You can focus the blast to knock your enemies senseless.

Compendium entry

Psionic Veil — **Psion Attack 27**

You pull a veil over your foes' senses, hiding yourself and your allies. With a little more power, you can blind your enemies.

Compendium entry

Level 29 Daily Disciplines

Microcosm — **Psion Attack 29**

You blast your foe with a cacophony of conflicting images and muscle commands, replacing its perception of reality with sights, sounds, and smells that don't exist.

Compendium entry

Soul Break — **Psion Attack 29**

You sear your foe with an ebony ray of psychic compulsion, giving it the choice to remain under your domination or pay a terrible price.

Compendium entry

COMMENTARY

Andy: *Player's Handbook* 3 includes an array of feats designed for the psion. Some complement a specific build, while others are useful to psions of every flavor.

Andy: *Player's Handbook* 3 presents four paragon paths for the psion, two of which debut here.

Of course, your paragon-tier psion isn't limited to only these two path choices; you might also select a racial paragon path (such as those presented in *Player's Handbook 2*) or use multiclassing to select a path associated with a different class.

Bruce: When we began concepting psionics as they would appear in *Player's Handbook* 3, we wanted the "story" of psionics to be just as compelling as the mechanics—and in fact, for the two to inform one another. Rather than just saying, "psionics are now part of the world and here are the classes that use it," we wanted to know why and how the power source came to be. We knew this knowledge would help push the class design in new directions.

We hit on the idea that psionics appeared as a sort of collective unconscious immune response of the world itself to the gradually worsening impingement of the Far Realm on the natural cosmos. The psionic and/or psychic nature of many of these threats, such as mind flayers and aboleths, drew a similar response in the world—first just here and there, but as time wore on, more and more instances of psionics appeared. It is as if the cosmos itself is preparing soldiers for some future catastrophic war.

The cerulean adept paragon path speaks directly to that story concept. The story of the Keepers of the Cerulean Sign first appeared in the *Lords of Madness* sourcebook for 3rd Edition D&D, then migrated into the Forgotten Realms novel series that begins with *Plague of Spells*. With these antecedents, the cerulean adept and its many anti-aberration abilities pretty much wrote themselves.

Psion Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
Discipline Adept	—	Use each Discipline Focus power twice per encounter
Dominating Mind	11th level	Dazed, dominated, or stunned foe takes -2 to first save
Exchange Power	*Send thoughts*	Use *send thoughts* to transfer 1 power point
Precise Mind	—	Hit with augmented power to gain +2 to attack with unaugmented powers
Psychic Defense	11th level	Hit with unaugmented at-will power to gain +2 to defense against melee attacks
Tower of Iron Will	21st level	When you score a psionic critical hit, gain +4 to defenses

Feats

The full text of these feats appears in the D&D Character Builder and the D&D Compendium.

Paragon Paths

Cerulean Adept

"The walls of the world are thinner than most suspect. Demons and undead are bad enough, but things far worse seek to break through and feast on reality. I won't allow it."

Prerequisite: Psion

An order of protectors called the Keepers of the Cerulean Sign formed long ago to face the threat of the Far Realm's collision with reality. The keepers achieved a great victory and fenced out an invading sovereignty of madness behind potent seals. But as often happens, without an imminent threat to face, the protectors slowly faded from history, and their most potent weapons, artifacts known as the Seven Cerulean Seals (also called the Seven Keys), were lost or destroyed.

But the Far Realm remains. Its presence is a barb in reality's side. Some say psionic power itself is the world's answer to the Far Realm. Just as a body unconsciously fights off sickness, the universe prepares for some future battle by sowing psionic potential among its denizens.

Your psionic ability alerted you to the growing aberrant threat at a young age. Despite being a psionic weapon against aberrant spawn, you sought out even more potent weapons. While in the depths of a psionic trance, you glimpsed the original Cerulean Seals. There is little hope of recovering them, but you formed an image of them in your mind and created a copy. Like one of the seals, your copy—a Cerulean Sign—consists of a stylized white tree on a sky-blue background. Though imperfect, it is enough to empower you. You have taken up the sign and pledged yourself to the world's defense.

Cerulean Adept Path Features

Cerulean Sign Focus (11th level): You gain a +1 bonus to Will.

Cerulean Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to use an at-will attack power that has a 1-point augmentation, you can use that augmentation without spending a power point.

Paragon Power Points (11th level): You gain 2 additional power points.

All-Seeing Eye (16th level): When you attack with an augmented psionic power, you can score a critical hit on a roll of 19–20. When you attack an aberration with an unaugmented psionic power, you can score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.

Cerulean Adept Disciplines

The full text of these powers appears in the D&D Character Builder and the D&D Compendium.

Cerulean Blaze **Cerulean Adept Attack 11**

You brandish the Cerulean Sign, channeling its radiance to shove your foe back so hard that it falls. By channeling a bit more energy, you can affect more enemies.

Compendium entry

Harden Mind **Cerulean Adept Utility 12**

By focusing on what's real, you shut out the psychic tumult damaging you.

Compendium entry

Seal the Threshold **Cerulean Adept Attack 20**

You emanate a blaze of cerulean fire and shoot it toward your foe, engulfing that enemy in the fire's fury. The fire continues to burn those tainted by aberration.

Compendium entry

Uncarnate

"This shell of skin, organs, and bones is only a vessel—one I yearn to leave behind to be free of the limitations of matter."

Prerequisite: Psion

An uncarnate's ultimate goal is to become a being of pure mind, unbound by the limits of corporeality. "The flesh is weak, but the mind is strong" is an aphorism among many psions, but uncarnates take it as their guiding truth. They seek to become discarnate, to grow into creatures of pure thought held together by psionic will.

Uncarnates don't seek the paths of undeath that some arcanists choose. Though uncarnates using their abilities are sometimes mistaken for wraithlike spirits, such spirits are bound by the chill chains of undeath, not the self-generated will of psionic might.

You set yourself possibly the greatest psionic challenge: to maintain the clarity and power of your mind as you slowly work at forgetting the flesh that supports it. In the end, it's only the mind that matters.

Uncarnate Path Features

Flicker into Nothing (11th level): When you spend an action point to attack with a psionic power, you become insubstantial until the end of your next turn.

Misty Step (11th level): Your psionic attacks ignore the insubstantial quality.

Paragon Power Points (11th level): You gain 2 additional power points.

Discarnate Form (16th level): When you spend at least 4 power points to augment a psionic power, you become insubstantial until the end of your next turn.

Uncarnate Disciplines

The full text of these powers appears in the D&D Character Builder and the D&D Compendium.

Phantom Hook **Uncarnate Attack 11**

You let fly a psychic harpoon, which disrupts both flesh and incorporeal matter with equal reliability.

Compendium entry

Shed Body **Uncarnate Utility 12**

You cast aside your body, briefly becoming a creature of pure thought.

Compendium entry

Dissolve the Flesh **Uncarnate Attack 20**

You concentrate on the matter making up your foe. With a psionic strike, you destabilize that matter, and your foe begins to dissolve away.

Compendium entry

COMMENTARY

Bruce: The uncarnate paragon path speaks to the triumph of mind over body. In a book detailing psionics, this concept cries out to be explored. Different fantasy and science fiction books have touched on this same concept, such as Julian May's novel *Jack the Bodiless* and in at least one episode of *Babylon 5*.

To become a creature of pure thought seems to be the goal of many an evolved race; why shouldn't the same be true for an individually evolved psion who wants to press her mind's power to the limit?

about the author

Bruce R. Cordell is an Origins award-winning game designer for Wizards of the Coast LLC. His long list of professional credits includes the *Draconomicon*™: *Chromatic Dragons* supplement, the new Forgotten Realms® *Campaign Guide*, and several Forgotten Realms novels.

by Robert J. Schwalb

Tu'narath
City of Death

illustrations by Adam Paquette & Brandon Leach, Empty Room Studios, and Michael Komarck ✦ cartography by Robert Lazzaretti

SCALES OF WAR™

IN AN AGE BEFORE MORTAL RECKONING, there was war. A world, long forgotten and held in thrall by illithid overlords, groaned under the mind flayers' influence. From this realm, the illithid's slave-warriors sailed the Astral Sea, scouring the infinite plane for new worlds to conquer and new chattel for their masters' unspeakable appetites. For eons, these mortals endured losing generations to endless conquest and endless war.

Yet for all the crushing oppression, these thralls were no meek servants, and time and again, they rose up to fight against those who would control their destiny, and each uprising met devastating defeat. So these people endured, gathering strength, fighting the illithid, yet always feeling their shackles tighten. Their suffering might have continued unabated until the end of days, but a hero rose among them, uniting them and revealing the weakness in their decadent masters. A few joined her at first, but her legend would not be contained and not long after, the slaves on all worlds rose up as one to topple the illithid empire. A mighty achievement to be sure, but what would follow would secure Gith's place as one of the most dangerous mortals the worlds have ever known.

Tu'narath—also called the One in the Void, the City of Death—has names that echo throughout the planes, carrying with it the message of death and conquest, as well as of merciless warriors bound to a fanatical leader. Home to the githyanki, it is their greatest and most influential city, dwarfing all of their other settlements in size, wealth, and power. The githyanki

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are a formidable people in their own right, but their lost leader's legacy and the mad rule of their eternal Lich-Queen fill them with ruthless ambition, a thirst for conquest and bitter revenge, and a fierce independence that prevented them from surrendering. Tu'narath embodies their unfailing spirit, and as long as it stands, the githyanki cannot fail.

A History of War

"Our history is written in the stone beneath our feet, the silver swords in our hands, and the legacy left by our brilliant leader."
– Zetch'r'r, Leader of the Shasal Khou

Tu'narath's importance to the githyanki cannot be understated: It was the first city founded after their flight from their lost world and has stood as a shining beacon ever since—albeit it is a malevolent light at best. Its origins go back to the earliest ages, in the confused and contradictory days before civilization blossomed on the D&D® world. To understand how and why the githyanki found this sinister city, one must look to their very origins.

Generations spent in thrall to the mind flayers left an indelible mark on the people who would one day become the githyanki and githzerai peoples. Exposure to the Far Realm's corrupting influence combined with budding psionic power sparked by their world's reaction to the threat from without set in motion the evolutionary catalyst needed to transform these peoples from their humble roots to become the warriors they are today. Their mind flayer masters recognized their potential, and thus they used their slaves as foot soldiers in their conquests to expand their influence across the planes.

The Eternal Crusade

Gith's uprising achieved what had before been impossible. Her cunning leadership and single-minded purpose helped her deal the deathblow to the mind flayer masters, giving her people the precious gift of freedom.

Even with the success, Gith knew others languished in the illithid's clutches. If her people surrendered their hatred to rebuild their devastated world, the mind flayers might return with even more numbers and with other warriors to fight their battles. Gith had no doubt the mind flayers would exterminate them all. The answer to this lingering threat was to hunt down the illithids and destroy them root and branch.

Gith declared an Eternal Crusade, calling her people to join her in her genocidal mission. The githyanki were warriors, and fighting was all most understood. The people were past being farmers and crafters; they were killing machines. The promise of vengeance gave the githyanki something to do and also gave them a way off their desolate world, which was scorched and ruined by their uprising.

Zerthimon and the Civil War

Gith's people despised the mind flayers, but not all agreed the Eternal Crusade was in their best interest. The people had just come through a devastating war, their world was destroyed, and few among them had the wherewithal to begin the process of rebuilding. Furthermore, not all wanted to perpetuate the warrior society that had gained prominence because they saw it as an aberration forced on them by their former masters.

Although not widespread, these misgivings had already taken root among the people, owed in part to Gith's most outspoken critic: Zerthimon. A philosopher and warrior who had distinguished himself in the uprising and thus gained a small following of adherents, he taught a different path. He agreed the mind flayers would return, but argued that the same methods used to overcome them would be of little use in stopping another invasion. He taught the best defense was to embrace the new power within and unlock its secrets. Only then could the people fight their oppressors. Zerthimon's position gained adherents as it spread throughout the camps until he amassed a sizeable following—enough to dismantle the Eternal Crusade before it began.

For a time Gith tolerated Zerthimon; she would not see the freedom she had won dashed with a new tyranny, even if tyranny was for her own people's good. Her followers did not share her patience, however, and soon heated arguments erupted into open violence to silence the voice of opposition. Before Gith could react, the sporadic skirmishes exploded into civil war, and once started it appeared that it would find no end until one or both sides were destroyed.

The fighting raged for years, and terrible magic reduced what was already a wounded world into an uninhabitable cinder. With no end to the violence in sight, both sides withdrew. Those who followed Zerthimon, the githzerai, fled to the Elemental Chaos, and those sworn to Gith, withdrew to the Astral Sea. Though the plane divides them, the old hatreds burn still and the people have stood sundered, with little hope of reconciliation for thousands of years.

The One in the Void

Adrift in the Astral Sea, the githyanki had their burning hatred and their arms, but no home and few resources. They wouldn't wander long though before fate, luck, or circumstance put a new home in their path. Githyanki scouts discovered the petrified remains of some dead god, perhaps a casualty from another war, or a god whose people were destroyed. Gith led her people to the floating hulk and there established Tu'narath's ancestral encampments.

As fortuitous as finding the hulk was, the githyanki who settled in the folds and rocks knew they were much diminished from the war against their kin. In such small numbers, they couldn't hope to fight the Eternal Crusade, let alone raise new fortresses or even feed themselves. The situation was dire, but there would be a glimmer of hope in the sacrifice of the githyanki's glorious leader.

The Pact

The githyanki struggled to survive. They lacked resources, so they had to scavenge for supplies. They had no means to navigate the Astral Sea, so they had little luck finding the materials they needed. To make matters worse, ancient abominations, those twisted remnants from the war of creation, raided their camps, claiming more and more lives and undoing what little progress the githyanki were making. It was clear they wouldn't survive without help.

With enemies looming at all sides, the githyanki needed an alliance. Gith sent out representatives to treat with various powers residing in the Astral Sea. They had little luck: The githyanki were too warlike, too evil, and too few for a god or some other agency to step forward to give them aid, but the githyanki did have success in the Nine Hells. Vlaakith, Gith's most trusted advisor and confidant, had spent weeks negotiating with Dispater to recruit an infernal legion to shore up the weakened githyanki legions. Dispater's price, the souls of all githyanki, was far too high for Vlaakith to pay, but the archdevil had other ways to manipulate the exiles. In a show of goodwill, he offered to arrange a meeting between Gith and Tiamat's red dragon exarch. Tiamat and Asmodeus had been occasional allies, and the Dark Lady lent the Nine Hells her abishai in exchange for information, treasures, and the occasional assistance. Dispater believed the githyanki could negotiate a similar bargain with the Lady of Avarice and even offered his city to host the negotiations.

Vlaakith carried Dispater's offer back to Tu'narath and discovered her dubious offer was the best they had achieved, with all other roads leading to dead-ends. With little choice, Gith journeyed to the Nine Hells and there met with Ephelomon. Dispater acted as the mediator and observer. Ephelomon offered to send a wing of red dragons to aid the githyanki in exchange for the githyanki's assistance should Tiamat require it. To cement their pact, Ephelomon would forge a scepter to give Gith dominion over the dragons. Before they could finalize the terms, Dispater suggested to Ephelomon if he would entrust so many dragons to the githyanki, should he not gain some insurance? Dispater proposed Gith remain with him in the Nine Hells for as long as Tiamat upheld her side of the agreement. If either side breaks the alliance, Gith and the red dragons on loan would be free.

Ephelomon saw the wisdom in this proposition, and Gith agreed but with a condition. Gith required the githyanki be free to choose their own destinies and never be subservient to the Dark Lady. Finding nothing objectionable in this, the githyanki gained their infamous alliance and Dispater got his soul.

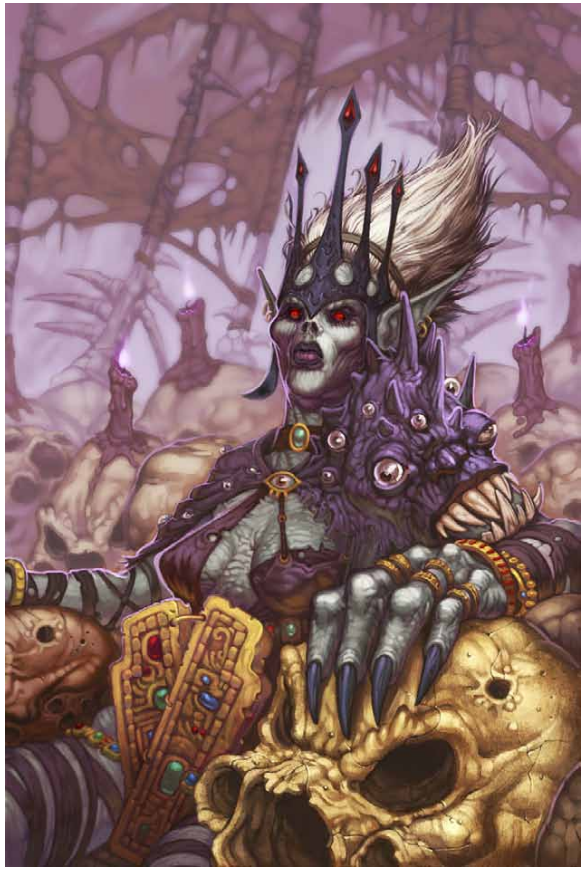
Before Ephelomon left Dis with the scepter, he asked the dragon to deliver her final command. Armed with Gith's request, the exarch traveled to Tu'narath, leading a flight of dragons to the githyanki city. There, the dragon gave the scepter to Vlaakith, because Gith had named her the successor, and revealed the leader's last command: Carry on the Eternal Crusade in my name.

The red dragons made the difference and with their help, the githyanki beat back the astral stalkers and other threats. As well, the dragons could move through the Astral Sea with ease, and so the githyanki could raid other dominions for foodstuffs and supplies and found new outposts. In the following years, Tu'narath evolved from its humble origins into a magnificent city, and so have the githyanki grown in power and influence, becoming one of the most feared peoples in all the Astral Sea and beyond.

The Lich-Queen of Tu'narath

When Vlaakith came to power after Gith's imprisonment in the Nine Hells, she started a millennia-long dynasty. Vlaakith was the first of a long procession of Vlaakiths who would rule the city and the githyanki. Some were strong, others weak, but all added to Vlaakith's legacy until the name transcended the person and became, in effect, a title.

The last ruler to bear this name is Vlaakith CLVII, and her reign has lasted a thousand years. When she came to power long ago, she was much like her predecessors: ambitious, cunning, and committed to the



Eternal Crusade, yet there was something different about this Vlaakith. She liked power. She didn't see herself as holding the throne for Gith, but rather she saw the throne as hers, and she was not about to give it up to a less worthy heir.

Not long into her reign, she performed the Lich Transformation ritual, but her undead state did little to quell her growing paranoia. Vlaakith saw enemies everywhere, even in the faces of her most trusted advisors. To protect herself, as well as to sustain her long life, she began a pogrom to eliminate potential rivals, wresting their souls from their bodies and animating their remains into undead thralls. By the time her practice became known, few were left to challenge her, and the rest have lived with Vlaakith CLVII for their entire lives and see her as more than their queen—and every bit a part of githyanki identity (as is their city).

Vlaakith's custom made her throne secure, though it had profound consequences on the Eternal Crusade. Eliminating the best and brightest githyanki has a leveling effect on githyanki society. Although it's hard to call any githyanki mediocre, few standouts exist among those who dwell in Tu'narath. The ranking officials are lickspittles and sycophants, and corruption is rampant in the highest levels. Worse, support for the Eternal Crusade wanes. Expeditions still set out from Tu'narath, but fewer and fewer return with new mind flayer skulls.

A shadow hangs over Tu'narath now. Each passing year sees Vlaakith's madness growing. She has withdrawn from public view, spending most of her time in Susurrus, the Palace of Whispers, where, if rumors can be believed, she works dread magic sending tremors to shake the city. In her stead, fanatic mages and inquisitors, calling themselves the Ch'r'ai move through the city, speaking of the Lich-Queen in terms more fitting for a god than an undead tyrant and executing any they suspect of treachery. To make matters worse, dragon-githyanki abominations infest the city and are permitted to go wherever they please because they have the Lich-Queen's blessing and are thought to be her favored subjects. Unrest and outrage grows, casting a terrible pall on the ancient city.

Tu'narath and the Scales of War

The Lich-Queen is dead. Emperor Zetch'r'r rules the githyanki in Tiamat's name. The city is infested with foreigners, and Vlaakith's heir hides within a rebel faction. Tu'narath groans.

The Scales of War adventure path presents a different city than the one presented here—a community ravaged by upheaval, external influence, and the mad designs of a dead monarch. Building on the events described in Chris Perkins' "The Lich-Queen's Beloved" presented in Dungeon® Magazine issue #100, the adventure path takes one possible outcome and projects it 25 years into the future.

Having ruled the githyanki for a thousand years, the Lich-Queen was no longer content with the limitations imposed on her by her rotting body. Her longevity would not last forever. Her command over the githyanki was not complete, and enclaves in the Astral Sea's far-reaches were free from her rule. She wanted more power, more influence, and true immortality. To this end, she would become a god.

Vlaakith long suspected a divine spark lingered in the dead god's petrified remains, and she believed that if she could tease it out, she could claim it for herself and complete her apotheosis. Her paranoia equaled her ambition and as she sought this ultimate transformation, her trust in her dread knights and commissars wavered. Using terrible magic, she formed a master race—a perfect fusion of githyanki and dragon to be her loyal children. She used these duthka'gith as her personal retinue and replaced her guards with these wild and unpredictable warriors.

Her seclusion coupled with the gradual spread of what many githyanki saw as abominations sowed the seeds of unrest in the city. Tu'narath had always housed opponents to Vlaakith's reign and her designs, seeing her power as a mockery of Gith's ancient intent, but these groups lacked the numbers or resources to oust the Lich-Queen. It seemed to these rebels that if they acted, there would be support for their coup after all.

The strongest and most radical opposition came from the Sha'sal Khou. They hoped to reunite the githzerai and the githyanki into one people and continue the Eternal Crusade as Gith had intended. Zetch'r'r, their leader and decorated knight, sheltered his followers in a Citadel, gathering strength and resources for the time when his followers could strike and then begin his reign as leader over all the gith peoples.

The Ch'r'ai, however, tightened their net, closing in on the rebel faction and if the Sha'sal Khou did not act fast enough, they would fail before they began. Zetch'r'r did the unthinkable: He turned to foreigners for help. Using mortals who had fought the githyanki in the past gave him a way to eliminate the Lich-Queen without implicating his organization.

As Zetch'r'r organized the assassination team, Vlaakith worked to complete her divine transformation. Terrible rituals sent tremors through the city. Just before she completed her transformation, the adventurers struck, destroying her and thwarting her designs. The resulting quakes nearly destroyed the city, toppling her dread palace and flattening a great many buildings all around. But tremors were nothing compared to the shockwaves resulting from the realization of Vlaakith's death.

Ztech'r'r moved to fill the Lich-Queen's void, but his ideas were too strange for the common githyanki to embrace. Unable to rally the military societies to his claim, he faced a half-dozen rivals, each with considerable strength. Worse, many suspected his hand in the Lich-Queen's death, and his treachery further weakened his position.

The Dark Lady coveted the githyanki, always resentful of Dispater's influence and the poor bargain her exarch made long ago.

Zetch'r'r would not be thwarted and could not allow his city to fall or his dreams to die. His warriors were too few and his faction crumbled around him. In desperation, he turned to the githyanki's oldest ally, Tiamat. By altering the pact's terms, he hoped to gain the red dragons' aid and thus claim the city by force.

The Dark Lady coveted the githyanki, always resentful of Dispater's influence and the poor bargain her exarch made long ago. So when Zetch'r'r approached her, she welcomed him, but this time she demanded the githyanki oaths of service and the githyanki's absolute loyalty to her. Knowing the alternatives worse than making such a terrible bargain, Zetch'r'r consented to the new terms and returned to Tu'narath with Tiamat's armies in tow. Tu'narath fell in a single day and Zetch'r'r named himself emperor.

Zetch'r'r had hoped to outwit the Dark Lady and use her legions to help him restore his people and continue the Eternal Crusade as he had always hoped, but Tiamat had other plans. She cared nothing for the githyanki's old grudges and was far more concerned about her plan to destroy her hated rival, Bahamut. To this end, she bent the githyanki, making them her slaves. The emperor realized his miscalculation, but is powerless to correct it. If he fights against the Dark Lady, she will take the city by force and worsen the githyanki's lot. So he holds his throne, hoping to find some way to remove Tiamat's influence before his people are lost.

Zetch'r'r, though, has far larger problems than Tiamat's influence. The alliance he brokered invalidated the first pact between Gith and Ephelomon and in doing so freed Gith from the Nine Hells. The famed hero's body had long rotted away, leaving Gith to languish in Dispater's dungeons as a damned. Rather than letting her soul discorporate in the Shadowfell, Gith instead returned to Tu'narath to take charge of the city.

Gith might have invaded Zetch'r'r's body or the Commissar's and saved Tu'narath if it wasn't for a young woman. A ghustil, who is a member of an uncommon githyanki group that apprehends loose divine energy infusing the Astral Sea and bends it to their will, ensnared Gith's soul and in doing so invited the powerful entity into her body. Gith annihilated the young woman's mind and seized the body for herself. Given her low status, she knew she could not hope to defeat Zetch'r'r without help.

There were factions aplenty for Gith to subvert to her cause. She gathered the remaining members of the ch'r'ai, claiming to be Vlaakith reborn. She then turned to the sha'sal khou, offering to complete

what they began and restore the gith people. Gith as Vlaakith amassed even more followers, drawing to her the disaffected and oppressed warriors who were fed up with Zetch'r'r's excesses. But even with her swelling forces, Gith knew she needed more help. As Gith's power grows, Tu'narath faces another uprising, but if Gith succeeds, it could very well be the last they face as the Crusade begins anew.

Geography

From afar, Tu'narath is a drifting mass surrounded by floating bergs and stony motes. As one draws nearer, the rocky hulk's disturbing shape comes into view, and it bears an uncanny resemblance to a massive corpse, with crowned head, six radiating arms, and a torso crumbling away to a spray of floating debris. The city itself covers the whole rocky surface, wrapping around its sides and underneath, from the head down the torso until the ground gives way to the broken tail. Streets wind and twist through packed districts, overcrowded with tall towers, mighty fortresses, and countless edifices to githyanki military might.

Floating fortresses of varying sizes and shapes clutter the area around the husk. Each fortress mirrors the architectural austerity found in the city. Stark towers are fitted with spines and looming walls, which provides an intimidating welcome to be sure.

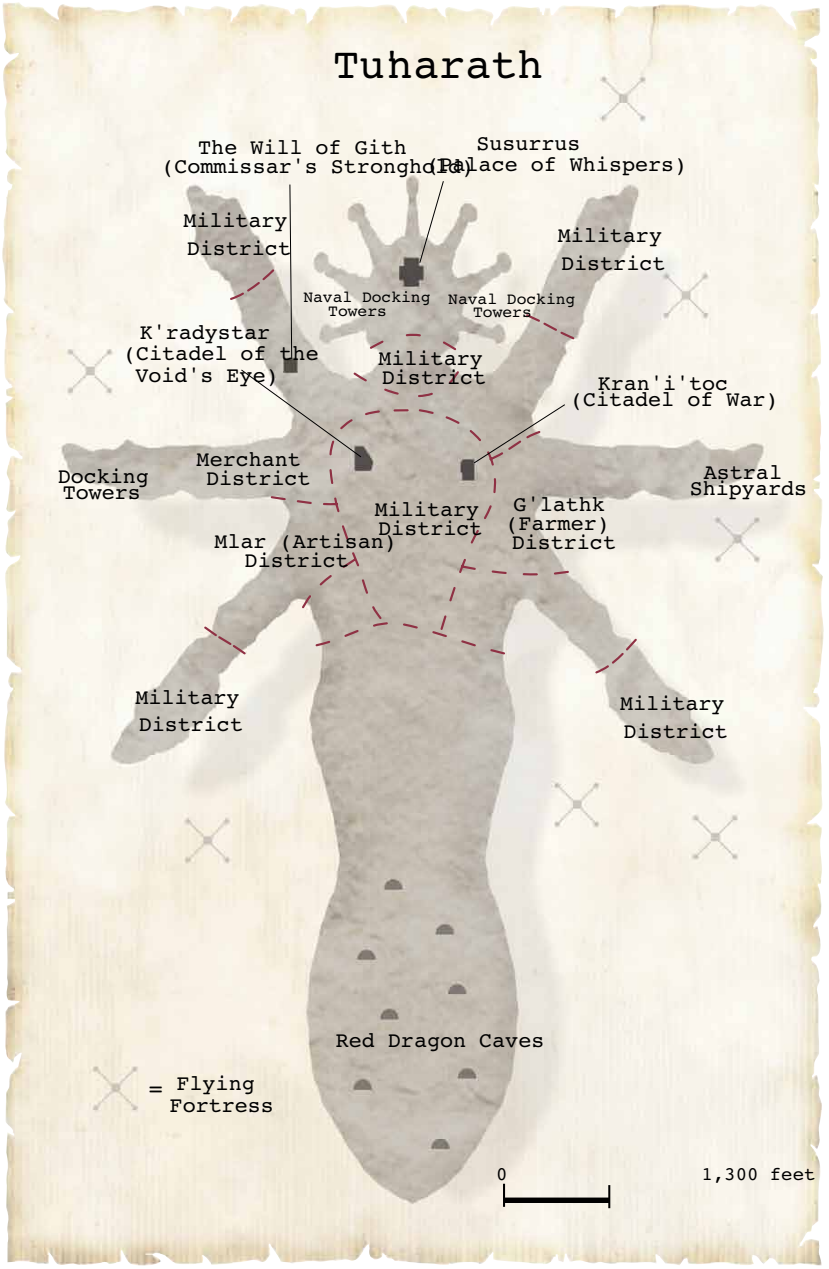
Around Tu'narath, gravity remains subjective, but when one closes within 200 feet, the mass exerts force causing creatures "fall" to the city. Down in Tu'narath is the ground, so even as one walks around the city to its "underside," there is no risk of falling. Since the city depends on astral vessels for transport and trade, Tu'narath constructed six arms extending beyond its queer influence to act as docking stations.

Although the hulk seems to drift through the Astral Sea, it is in fact locked in a fixed position, marking the very place where the god was slain. The astral currents swirl around it as does the wreckage making circuits around it. Tu'narath cannot be moved by any means. Nor can it be taken from the Astral Sea.

The One in the Void

One can only speculate about the dead being's identity, but most agree it was a god who passed from memory eons ago. Choosing this site to be the home of the greatest githyanki city in the Astral Sea was a matter of convenience, because it provided the largest surface for the githyanki refugees and offered an excellent staging ground for new offenses into other worlds. The githyanki didn't care that their city stood on a dead god because most regard the divine with scorn and derision. The dead god added to the githyanki's sinister reputation.

Generations spent on the petrified hulk have unveiled few secrets about the deity's identity. The githyanki refer to their host as the One in the Void. Its long silence and no objections to the githyanki presence reinforces their beliefs it is dead. Yet,



not all believe all life has fled the corpse and that some spark remains—some awareness that might stir to wakefulness on some distant day. The occasional quake and the subtle tremors suggest there is a remnant that can be unearthed.

Planar cosmologists argue about the One in the Void's true identity. Most agree the god was a casualty in the ancient war between the primordials and gods. Perhaps it is a fallen divinity destroyed by the elemental host when it rose up to smash down heaven's gates. Since the husk's name is lost, and given the long years the githyanki have inhabited it, this theory seems possible.

Some speculate the god is none other than Nerull, lost god of the dead. As legend tells, a mortal woman challenged the wicked god and slew him in battle. Since the Raven Queen's apotheosis occurred at some indeterminate point in the past, the One in the Void could very well be the lost god of the dead, but it doesn't explain why the god's corpse floats in the Astral Sea and not in Pluton, the deity's former dominion.

Another possibility is that the One in the Void is an exiled god's physical remnants—a deity whose essence was ripped from its flesh and imprisoned in some far-flung location. Sundered in this way, the One in the Void awaits its soul's restoration to its body. Insane folk and the mysterious Chained God's adherents aside, this possibility seems far-fetched at best.

It's also possible that the hulk is in fact a dead and forgotten primordial. The gods slew many primordials in the War for Creation and the remnants from this ancient war linger still. Whether the hulk is a primordial, an empty shell, or a dead god is still a point debated and one with no clear answer.

Finding Tu'narath

The githyanki are raiders and pirates bent on conquest and destruction. They have gained many enemies across the planes, and some are powerful enough to cause trouble. The githyanki do not advertise their city's location, preferring isolation to interacting with the Astral Sea's other denizens. The city boasts a few permanent teleportation circles, but the sigil sequences to these portals are guarded secrets.

For all their xenophobia, the githyanki do realize their limitations and understand that for them to survive as a race, they must have contact with other peoples. Tu'narath does permit merchants and visitors to the city, but with extreme limitations. Those permitted passage into Tu'narath guard the city's location with all the same enthusiasm as the githyanki because revealing it invites swift retribution from the githyanki and no one wants this attention.

TU'NARATH

Githyanki civilization's nexus, Tu'narath stands as a symbol of their strength and also as a warning to those who would stand against them.

Population: 100,000; githyanki are the dominant people in Tu'narath and are found in all its districts except in the Market District. The commercial center sees travelers from across the planes, each permitted to live and trade in the city by special dispensation from a military commander. Counted among these peoples are devas and tieflings, dragonborn and humans, angels, devils, elemental creatures, immortal creatures and everything between. Red dragons in scores round out the population.

Government: Despotic Monarchy. Vlaakith is the last in a long line of tyrants to bear her name. Her reign has lasted a thousand years, and she owes her incredible longevity to her apotheosis into a lich. Vlaakith does not often interact with her people except when a githyanki grows powerful enough to attract her attention, at which point the githyanki is brought before the Lich-Queen and is destroyed.

The city's governance falls to commissars who command the military societies dominating life in Tu'narath. Each commissar has absolute authority in his or her district and dispenses justice in whatever manner he or she feels appropriate.

Defense: Most githyanki serve in the military with allegiance to a society found in the military districts. Military societies raise armies consisting of warriors, gish, and warlocks. Foremost of these warriors are the githyanki knights who ride dragons into battle. Eight floating fortress are arranged around the city and each has a full company and two to four pact dragons to intercept foreign vessels coming too close to the city.

Inns: The Morningstar Inn; Iron House; The Dragon's Den; others. The Morningstar Inn is the most expensive but most popular establishment in the Market District. Taverns: The Winesink; Filthy Dredges; Nectar House; others.

Supplies: The Market District is the commercial center in the city and one can find just about anything they could want. Merchants sell from established shops, open-air markets, or from carts along the streets. Businesses cluster together along streets set aside for trade. Kyndl street, for example, offers alchemical supplies, poisons, and ritual ingredients.

Temples: There are no temples in Tu'narath. Important Structures: Susurrus, the Palace of Whispers; the Citadel of War; Citadel of the Void's Eye; Statue of Gith.

Entering the City

Since they lack reliable transport by the use of teleportation circles, to reach the city, a traveler must learn its coordinates and make the journey. Portals, pools, and curtains in the Astral Sea make crossing the distance easy if a navigator knows where to go. Such travel requires several jumps across the Astral Sea to distant (and dangerous) locations until the city comes into view.

Finding the city is but the first hurdle. One just doesn't fly up to Tu'narath and start looking around. As a traveler nears the city, astral skiffs and githyanki mounted on pact dragons close to engage the visitor. The githyanki destroy foreigners at a whim and take what they want from the wreckage, so a traveler must act to put these sentinels' at ease. Those who show proper deference and respect, and who also show they have something to offer, are escorted to a Floating Fortress where the travelers can negotiate with the garrison commander for a trade exemption granting access to the city's Merchant District.

There is no set price for what a trade exemption costs. Prices range from a modest 2 gold pieces and climb as high as an astral diamond. The cost depends on the commander, the merchant, and the cargo to be delivered to the city. Merchants with goods in high demand can get into Tu'narath for a reasonable fee, while those with useless or impractical materials face such a prohibitive cost that venturing further would prevent any profit at all. On occasion, visitors might receive special permission to enter the city without having to acquire the exemption, but such occasions are rare.

Exploring the City

The Merchant District is all that a visitor can expect to see in Tu'narath. Foreigners are never permitted beyond its walls, and to ensure visitors abide by these restrictions, githyanki warriors monitor the district's gates and patrol its walls. Those caught beyond the Merchant District face execution, torture and execution, or thralldom and eventual death.

Since there isn't much space for growth, the githyanki build up. Most buildings have several stories all supported by flying buttresses, with graceful bridges connecting the upper levels. The Astral Sea shines with faint light, enough to see by, but in the cramped corridors formed by ominous buildings, the gloom becomes pervasive and is broken by the occasional lamp or everburning torch.

Statues stand in the few squares, capturing githyanki heroes mounted on vicious red dragons, past Vlaakiths and other legendary figures.

The City's Atmosphere

Tu'narath was first founded as a stronghold and mustering place for the githyanki raiders. Later it grew into the teeming metropolis it is today. Its military origins are manifest in the city's architecture and layout. The buildings are all fortified, with steep walls that bristle with long spikes, and that are fitted with slim, tall windows—perfect for warlocks and archers to harry invaders. Narrow streets wind through the pressing buildings and if the city comes under attack, the githyanki can block off roads, thus sealing off enemy units for the githyanki to surround and annihilate.

For all its military aspects, Tu'narath has a gothic beauty. Statues stand in the few squares, capturing githyanki heroes mounted on vicious red dragons, past Vlaakiths and other legendary figures. Battle scenes cover walls and buildings, showing githyanki warriors battling githzerai, mind flayers, slaad, and other creatures.

Tu'narath presents a macabre face, filled with austere and cruel citizens, but the city possesses an impressive, dizzying landscape that is designed to both celebrate and inspire githyanki achievements. To its inhabitants, it symbolizes all the githyanki believe in and hope to achieve, and those dwelling here would gladly lay down their lives in its defense.

Merchant District

Shabby and chaotic, decaying buildings rise from a sea of tents and stalls.

The Merchant District is the most cosmopolitan quarter in the city. Confined by steep walls manned by grim warriors, the district has extinction's threat casting a pall over it. Even so, commerce thrives here, and it has a peculiar exuberance not found anywhere else in the city. The Merchant District is the one place in the city where nongithyanki are permitted, and as such the githyanki leave it to the merchants and foreigners to live as they wish. One can find repre-

sentatives from every mortal race, including humans elves, dwarves, and gnomes, clogging the open-air markets. This diverse population is made stranger still by the planar peoples hailing from across the cosmos. Bladelings and maruts hire out as mercenaries, while angels flit between the towering buildings on errands for their masters on the streets below. Devils run bordellos and pleasure dens, tempting travelers with dubious offerings, while efreeti represent sprawling mercantile syndicates rooted in the fabled City of Brass.

Although set aside for commerce, the Merchant District is also a home. Artisans keep permanent residences here, while inns and tenement towers provide long-term accommodations for foreigners who would make the city a temporary home. Foreigners are not permitted to own land in Tu'narath and so anyone who would stay here must rent their domiciles from a nilghar (landowner). Few nilghar reside in the Merchant District, and they rely on proxies to handle business dealings, with many skimming tidy profits from their business dealings.

Finally, the Will of Gith houses Vlaakith's commissar and his staff. Although Vlaakith rules the city in name, it falls to the commissar to govern in practice. Here one finds all the administrative offices and the Commissar's personal garrison.

Queen's District

Endless tombs and towering statues surround Susurrus, the Palace of Whispers.

Crowning the One in the Void is the Queen's District. This district is a somber and brooding place, different from the crowded streets characterizing every other area in the city. Most available space is given over to the city's necropolis, where tombs and monuments form a sprawling maze. Smaller administrative buildings stand amid them, and here the Lich-Queens servants barrack and train. Each building is constructed with defense as the foremost concern, sprouting spikes and fitted with narrow windows.

Susurrus, the Palace of Whispers, commands attention from any who would explore this district, for it is a magnificent structure that speaks to Vlaakith's arrogance and power. Constructed from the dead god's massive skull, it stands behind Gith's likeness, standing one-hundred-feet-tall and carved from solid obsidian. The palace itself is an impregnable fortress, reinforced with obsidian walls and guarded by Vlaakith's personal retinue. There is but one way into palace and it is through the statue's legs.

The corridors and chambers form a veritable labyrinth inside Susurrus, and each is decorated with idols, statuary, and other relics from civilizations the githyanki defeated. One can find petrified mind flayers, githzerai skulls, and stranger and darker treasures gifted to the city's tyrant. A chamber is filled with statues carved for each Vlaakith who has ever ruled Tu'narath, some rooms are formed from illithid flesh, several abattoirs are littered with rotting corpses, plus torture chambers and other such rooms exist. And through it all, one hears endless whispers—maddening voices echoing and wailing in the palace's very walls.

As impressive as Susurrus's rooms are, the throne room puts it all to shame. It is a gargantuan hall supported by four wide obsidian pillars from which hang the Lich-Queen's latest victims. A mosaic pattern covers the floor leading up to the tyrant's throne, which is positioned between two alcoves filled with treasures. These alcoves act as nests for wingless red dragon guardians. Vlaakith's throne and the dais on which it stands are made from mind flayer skulls. The seat's cushions are sewn from purplish leather formed from an elder brain the Lich-Queen slaughtered in her youth. It is here where the Lich-Queen confers with her subjects and passes judgment on those who have wronged her.

Glathk District

A stinking mire of desperation and melancholy rising from stunted fields and steaming holes burrowing into the city's rocky core.

On the side opposite the Merchant District stands the Glathk District. Nowhere else in the city does the githyanki's cruelty shine so brightly. This hellish place is home to those captives who must toil and endure profound cruelties on behalf of their githyanki captors. The surface is patchwork muddy fields and deep, cavernous tunnels. The fields are used to grow some grains and also to house the slaves and dragon livestock (old, sick, and injured slaves), as well as the farmers unfortunate enough to be born to this lot. Tunnels lead to moist caverns where the glathk grow fungi that forms a staple in githyanki diet.

Mlar District

A vibrant community of artists and artisans, the Mlar District serves as the heart of Tu'narath's industry

Adjoining the Merchant District and surrounded by the brooding Military Districts to all sides, the Mlar District produces vital goods for Tu'narath. Named for the artisan class, this quarter is an active place, with

Githyanki Ships

The githyanki boast an impressive fleet of astral warships. The nimble astral skiff (Manual of the Planes page 159) is the smallest and most numerous. Other vessels are far larger, transporting entire companies into battle. The workhorse transport is the astral carrack.

Astral Carrack
Gargantuan vehicle

HP 400 Space 8 squares by 20 squares Cost 225,000 gp
AC 4; Fortitude 20, Reflex 2
Speed fly 6 (hover), overland flight 10

Pilot
The pilot must stand at the ship's wheel, typically at the rear of the topmost deck.

Crew
In addition to the pilot, an astral carrack requires a crew of twenty, all of whom use a standard action each round to help control the vehicle. Reduce the ship's speed by 2 for every 5 missing crew members. At fly speed 0, the astral carrack sails out of control.

Load
Two hundred Medium creatures; five hundred tons of cargo.

Out of Control
An out-of-control astral carrack moves forward at half speed (not including any modifiers for its astral sails).

Astral Attunement
The astral carrack functions only in the Astral Sea.

Ram
The astral carrack is equipped with a heavy ram. The astral carrack deals 3d6 damage per square it moved in its previous turn (Adventurer's Vault page 16), and the astral carrack and its crew take only one-quarter this damage.

rumbling factories belching black plumes into the air, dirty workers trudging through streets beneath stone gargoyles' watchful eyes where they leer from ornate buildings, and bustling shipyards, where skiffs and carracks stand in varying states of completion. There is beauty here too. The people have a unique aesthetic and cover every surface with some stonework or plaque bearing a motto or extolling labor's virtues.

Military Districts

Severe fortresses, bristling towers, training compounds, and the pride of Gith stand firmly in the Military Districts..

With its militaristic society, it should come as no surprise that the Military Districts are both the most impressive and the most numerous in Tu'narath. Divided into six separate areas placed to lock down the city should it come under attack, the districts house warrior companies and provide training for trainees.

A district comprises several different military societies, and each displays its achievements in statuary and bas-relief carvings adorning their walls. The societies are competitive and each tries to outdo the other in their achievements and victories. Although these relations can become heated, they do not break into violence lest they draw the Lich-Queen's ire.

Each society has a complex hierarchy of warrior companies and their terrths). One can also find knights, gish, warlocks, and other key personnel. A supreme commander leads the society. Since negotiations with other supreme commanders and strategic planning occupy their time, supreme commanders depend on captains to handle the companies under their command.

In addition to the military compounds, the military districts also contain key citadels for the city's elite. Kranitoc, the Citadel of War, trains the gish. Githyanki who display a talent with magic are sent to this foreboding structure to weave their arcane talents with martial training to make them invaluable additions to a company. The Citadel of the Void's Eye performs in the same capacity but for those githyanki who possess psionic abilities.

Other Areas

The aforementioned districts make up Tu'narath, but other key areas are here as well. Though none are as populated or large enough to qualify as a district, they offer a critical service to the city's survival.

Astral Shipyards: The githyanki owe much of their success in exploring the Astral Sea to their innovations in ship design. The astral shipyards are where artisans, laborers, and mages construct these vessels, and one can find astral skiffs, astral carracks, warships, spelljammers, and other vehicles moored to piers. Githwarriors watch over this work from guard towers, and nearby floating fortresses can dispatch pact dragons and riders to intercept any attacks on this key area.

Docking Towers: Opposite the Astral Shipyards and across the city are the docking towers. This area is the primary artery into the city, and visitors must pass through this area before progressing to the Merchant District beyond. Visitors must endure intense screening at various checkpoints and it's not uncommon for people to disappear—snatched by the githyanki secret police.

Naval Docking Towers: Radiating out from the Queen's District are the Naval Docking Towers, where Tu'narath's warships dock. Soldiers must pass beneath the shadow cast by Susurrus to reach their ships, reinforcing the ideals and beliefs that have long

shaped githyanki society. Only military personnel are permitted here and trespassers face intense questioning before suffering an excruciating death.

Flying Fortresses: Surrounding the city are several chunks of astral debris atop which the githyanki build small, fortified citadels. A flying fortress is actually one central structure surrounded by smaller chunks anchored to the largest piece by chains forged from astral driftmetal. The debris comes from across the Astral Sea and other worlds, with some being rugged stone and others being massive statue heads, limbs, smaller petrified creatures, and stranger stuff as well.

The flying fortresses protect the city and act as a net to catch any undesirables before they draw too close. Each fortress has a standing garrison. The fortresses also have two or more pact dragons and riders to engage vessels or travelers coming too close to the city. Most also have one or more astral skiffs and can scramble them should the city come under attack.

A typical fortress boasts a full company—four combat squads and one support squad. A terrth heads up each squad and reports to the kithrak (captain). In battle, two companies load up into astral skiffs to support the kithrak, who rides a pact dragon. The remaining githyanki provide support from the fortress by using heavy ballistae mounted on the walls.

Githyanki society might be evil, but it is ordered evil.

Red Dragon Caves: Half the husk houses red dragons. Claiming the crumbling expanse serving as the dead god's torso and lower extremities, endless tunnels and caverns provide lairs and hatcheries for the population. Most dragons found here are the lesser pact dragons claiming descent from those first reds who answered Ephelomon's call. Lesser beasts, inbreeding left them much reduced from their unbound counterparts. Although outnumbered by their diminished kin, many red dragons lair here as well and might lend their services to mighty githyanki knights or can be depended on to protect Vlaakith as per the ancient pact.

A Militant People

Spending any time in Tu'narath puts a visitor in contact with githyanki culture. They share much in common with other advanced civilizations, but the githyanki have customs and beliefs to set them apart.

Society

Githyanki society might be evil, but it is ordered evil. Castes define life in Tu'narath, with the upper echelons occupied by the city's warriors and lower levels given over to skilled and unskilled laborers. The castes are porous, allowing githyanki to move from one caste to another based on personal achievements and training. It might be rare for a githyanki to rise or fall to another caste, but birth in no way prevents a child from doing so. Even the lowliest glathk might produce a warrior.

The caste system is as old as the githyanki themselves, and it was first established during their captivity. Since the githyanki warriors were accorded the greatest freedoms under the mind flayer oppressors, and since they fomented the uprising buying their freedom, the warriors occupy the highest caste. Adherence to this system ensures githyanki knows their place. Membership in a caste doesn't prevent mingling with others, but since the higher castes expect and receive obedience from lesser githyanki, few congregate with others outside their social group.

Military Caste

The military caste stands above all others, and the lowliest trainee stands higher than does the greatest artisan in the city. All defer to the military because in them lies githyanki's strength and their continued commitment to the Eternal Crusade. As one might expect, the military caste uses a complex ranking system. At the bottom are the trainees, those warriors still mastering the fighting arts. Those who survive training become warriors, who are further divided between blooded and unblooded warriors, a distinction made in whether or not a githyanki has seen combat.

Silver Swords

Many githyanki warriors wield silver swords in battle, but these weapons are nothing more than silvered weapons used to emulate those mighty weapons gifted to the githyanki knights. True githyanki silver swords are rare and are entrusted to the best warriors because they are hand-crafted by Vlaakith herself. Most are greatswords, but there are longsword and full-blade varieties. Finding such a weapon fall into nongithyanki hands is a grave offense, and the githyanki stop at nothing to recover the blade. For details on these weapons, see githyanki silver weapon in the *Manual of the Planes* (page 153).

The githwarriors are organized into eight-member squads led by a terrth (a sergeant), who oversees continued training and leads them in battle. Five squads and their terrths form into companies led by a kithrak (a captain). Kithrak is the highest rank an ordinary githyanki can attain.

Above the kithraks are the supreme commanders. They gain their positions through their achievements and receive their commissions from the Commissar.

Gish and warlocks have greater standing thanks to fighting techniques learned at the Citadel of War or the Citadel of the Void's Eye. Gish and warlocks can serve alongside warriors in squads and can attain ranks the equal to terrths and kithraks. Although equal to their warrior counterparts, gish and warlocks have greater authority thanks to their advanced training.

Above all the rest in the military caste, on par with the supreme commanders, are the githyanki knights. The very best githwarriors are chosen to become knights, and those who accept must cede their souls to the Lich-Queen in exchange for greater power. Githyanki knights are the elite warriors, and they embody excellence in arms and unswerving loyalty to their queen. Githyanki knights wear the distinctive baroque armor for which the githyanki are famous, wield potent silver swords, and ride powerful red dragons or nightmares into battle.

Mlar Caste

Beneath the military caste are the mlar. This tier includes just about everyone not involved in military matters, and so one finds landowners, crafters, mages, seers, healers, and, of course, the artisans. Within this level, rank blurs depending on the individual's fortunes and circumstances. What unites them all is they have some talent at magic.

Counted among the mlar are the hracknir, a special and much-maligned breed who specialize in harnessing the divine energy permeating the Astral Sea and bending it toward positive uses such as healing, treating diseases, and other uses. The scorn they receives stems from the general derision githyanki have for the gods, and the power the hracknir wield is filthy in githyanki eyes.

Nongithyanki have no rights and no recourse for assault, murder, or theft.

Glathk Caste

Tu'narath's least citizens are the farmers and laborers, called the glathk. Lacking any magical or psionic talent and unsuited for military life, these githyanki are a lowly people, enduring wretched and unpleasant lives feeding the city and raising its structures. Still, the glathk stand higher than the thralls they oversee and for that at least they can be thankful.

Thralls

Although the githyanki would rather die than become slaves, they take thralls to use as labor, sport, or as food for themselves and the dragons who also dwell in Tu'narath. Life as a slave is a series of horrors concluding with a sudden, horrible end. The githyanki pay no attention to racial distinctions: Nongithyanki are the same and there's no difference between an eladrin and a goblin aside from the labor they can perform and the food they might supply.

Slavery never extends beyond one generation. A slave's child is free and can leave at anytime. Slaves are permitted to raise their children, but during these years, offspring are expected to work. When the child comes of age, he or she can stay and become a thrall, leave for the Market District, or find some way off Tu'narath. Beyond the city, though, they are fair game. Few escape capture and are killed or enslaved with Tu'narath still in sight.

Law and Order

There can be no question about morality in Tu'narath; it is a city occupied by evil individuals under the rule of a profoundly evil regime. Githyanki are cruel and malicious, but each understands the limits imposed by their station and status within the larger community. Society and law are indistinguishable, and violating a social expectation is tantamount to murder in a more reasoned and just community. Where social boundaries keep most githyanki in line, fear contains the rest: Punishments are too horrific and lingering to contemplate. Tu'narath has little crime as a consequence. Where disputes arise, a commissar or his representatives can settle them.

Nongithyanki have no rights and no recourse for assault, murder, or theft. Foreigners learn to treat the githyanki with respect and deference. Foreigners who commit infractions against the githyanki find even less justice, because the city responds with crushing, brutal force whenever a citizen, even a lowly one, suffers at a foreigner's hand. The laws for these perpe-

trators are little more than a staggering list of terrible punishments for a long list of crimes ranging from meeting a githyanki's gaze to murder to "behavior unbefitting a guest," the catch-all crime for removing undesirables. Military commanders dispense justice, but the worst criminals are brought before the Commissar to face whatever disturbing and excruciating end the city's commanding officer can devise.

Disputes between nongithyanki enjoy the closest the city has to an actual justice system. When a crime is reported, both the accuser and the accused are brought before a district official, or, for the most egregious crimes, the Commissar. Both parties get a moment to state their case and the officer passes judgment. Usually, the accused meets a bloody end, but the officer mmightay order both's execution, such as when thorny disputes prove too difficult to untangle or when the judge would remind foreigners to keep their problems to themselves.

One rule stands above all: Githzerai and mind flayers are to be killed on sight. If any dare enters the city, Tu'narath rises up in response and crashes down on the unwelcome foes with tremendous force. There is no mercy: There is only vengeance.

Religion

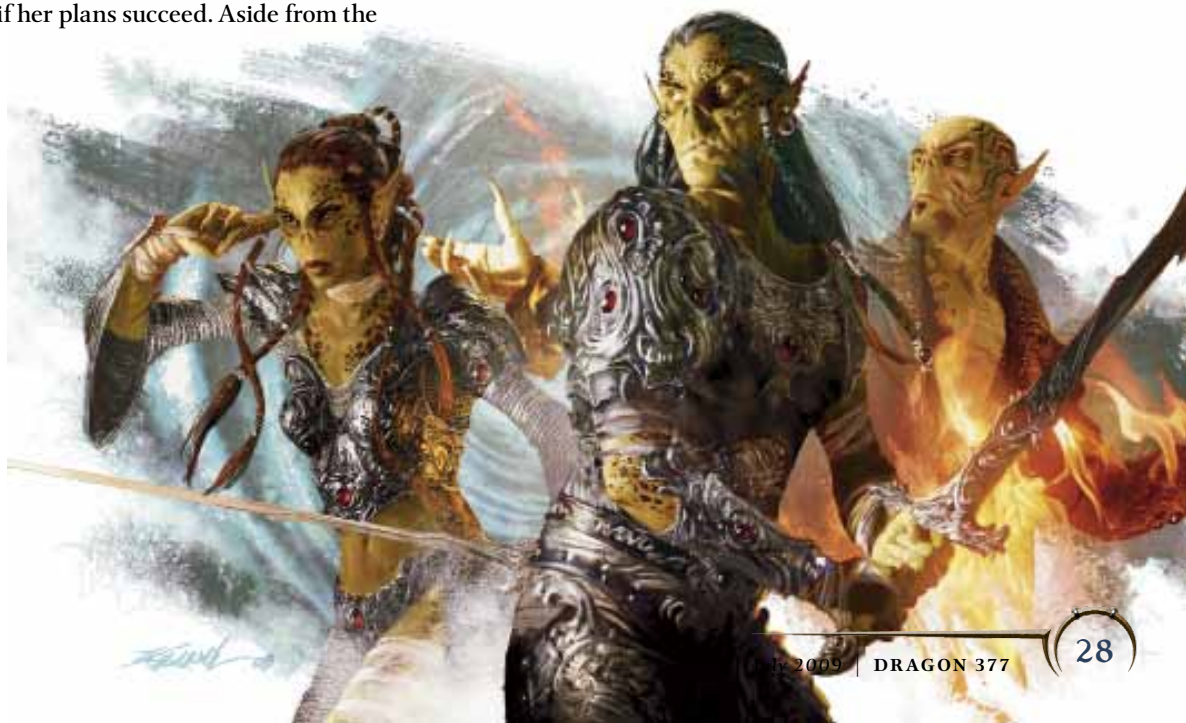
The gods are not welcome in Tu'narath. Vlaakith CLVII stamps out any fledgling religions, executing any who would bend a knee to anyone other than herself. Even without Vlaakith, the githyanki have proved to have little interest in the gods. Thus, religion is unlikely to ever gain a foothold in the city.

Religious disinterest stems from many reasons, but two stand at the forefront. First, the githyanki live in the Astral Sea and so come into contact with divine beings and their agents. Proximity to these powers makes manifest the gods' imperfections and thus, to the disciplined and militant githyanki, makes them undesirable objects of veneration.

Second, subservience to the gods could be characterized as slavery. The gods demand honor without earning it; what have they done for the githyanki? The gods also demand service and obedience, tyranny's hallmarks. The gods are powerful, but such power is not enough to compel service.

Even though atheism is ingrained within the githyanki people, from time to time, a few do turn to the gods as a route to power or in the hopes of succor from cruel treatment from their kin. The gods served are almost all evil gods, with Tiamat, Bane, and Vecna being the most common. If these githyanki are discovered, they must forfeit their lives, so many flee to practice their faith without interference.

Githyanki fill the religious void with a peculiar veneration for their heroes. Vlaakith CLVII expects near worship from her subjects, and she might demand more if her plans succeed. Aside from the Lich-Queen, all githyanki hold Gith as the greatest warrior to have ever lived. Although they do not raise temples or hold services for their lost leader, they believe Gith will one day return and lead them to the ultimate conquest, forging an empire to span worlds and let the githyanki become the true masters of all things. Thus they wait, looking ahead to that uncertain time when their hero shall return. Little do they realize the time foretold is at hand.



About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is a freelance game designer with over one hundred design and development credits to his name. His most recent works include the *Player's Handbook 2*, P2 *Demon Queen's Enclave*, *Manual of the Planes*, *Martial Power*, *Draconomicon I: Chromatic Dragons*, the Forgotten Realms *Player's Guide*, and numerous articles in **Dragon** and **Dungeon** magazines. Robert lives in Tennessee with his wife Stacee and his crack kill-team of ninja cats.

Robert would also thank Charles Stross for coming up with the githyanki in the first place and Chris Perkins and James Wyatt for making the githyanki kick all kinds of ass.

EBERRON

Familiars by Artifice

by Jennifer Clarke Wilkes

Illustrations by Kurt Huggins and Zelda Devon, and Empty Room Studios artist Peter Lazarski

Heart-of-Beasts turned his head as the telepathic warning shouted. There, from the shadows—an arrow coming straight at him. The artificer brought his three fingers together in a clutching motion, and a silver hammer sprang to make an instant adjustment. A temporary flange spun the projectile out of its deadly path.

Anger was the prescribed emotional response, the warforged remembered. He clashed his jaw in a threatening fashion, and his eyes gleamed more brightly as he summoned a swarm of clockroaches to deal with the ambushers.

In Eberron, as elsewhere, arcane practitioners sometimes bind spirits to physical forms to serve as assistants, guardians, or simple companions. The circumstances of that world allow familiars to take shapes not found in other lands. In addition, artificers (particularly those of House Cannith) extend their expertise to craft and enhance familiars in ways unknown to other sorts of arcanists.

Some of the more bizarre forms of familiar are associated with particular organizations, or are so disturbing to common folk that those in their company are regarded with suspicion or outright hostility. It's one thing to have an owl on your shoulder or even a dog-shaped construct at your heel; openly carrying a

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horror of Xoriat or an icon of the Blood of Vol is not likely to win the hearts and minds of those you meet.

Familiars were introduced in *Arcane Power*. This article expands the selection of familiars, including many that are well suited to artificers, as well as some that work well with arcane leaders. It also debuts the familiar bloodsmith paragon path, as well as new magic items for use with familiars.

Paragon and Epic Familiars

Some familiars can be gained only at 11th level and higher, or at 21st level and higher. You can replace your current familiar with a new one when you reach a new level. Basically, treat this as though you were retraining the Arcane Familiar feat.

Crafted Familiars

Not every artificer is a tinker, but even those who lean toward battlesmithing often add personal touches to their familiars that mark them as unique to artificers. When you bind a spirit to a familiar's body, it takes on distinct characteristics. Many artificer familiars are homunculi of one sort or another. Warforged artificers might even duplicate parts of their own bodies to serve as familiars, such as disembodied hands ("Get Familiar," *Dragon*® #375) or warforged faceplates (see below), or they might fasten animated objects to themselves when the familiars are in passive mode.

When you choose a familiar for your artificer character, take a moment to think about how it looks in addition to assigning it a quirk or a personality. Here are a few ideas; feel free to choose one, or let it serve as inspiration for a personal touch of your own.

A beast is a typical familiar that is crafted to your specifications when you bind the spirit to it. An object, such as a lantern or a skull, is a spirit bound to an item, or it's an ordinary familiar that takes the shape of an object. A homunculus is a Tiny construct, often humanoid-shaped. An abstract familiar is a piece of its master's will, such as a chaos shard or a lingering nightmare.

Familiar Quirks

Abstract
- Swirling cloud that sometimes echoes its master's face
- A glow or aura surrounds its master while in passive mode

Beast
- Resembles an ordinary example of its kind, but its eyes glow with mysterious arcane light
- Has an identifying item worked into its body, such as a skullcap or harness

Homunculus
- Built of scraps from the workshop
- Looks disturbingly like its master

Object
- Has facelike markings on one surface
- Hums, pulses, or clanks while active

Eberron-Specific Familiars Outside Eberron

Although they originated in the Eberron® campaign setting, artificers can exist in any D&D® campaign. Many of the animated objects, mechanical creatures, and infused items presented here work just fine in any setting. Some, though, have specific Eberron associations and need some adjustment for use in a game not set in that world.

Shardbound Familiars

Dragonshards are inextricably bound up with the world of Eberron, but the concept of infusing a familiar with the power of a magical substance or crystal can work in any game.

One possibility is to bind a small quantity of fantastic terrain to a familiar. You can reproduce the effect of the Shardbound Familiar (Eberron) feat by infusing your familiar with a bit of phase mist (*Dungeon Master's Guide*® 2, page 61). Energy crystals (*Manual of the Planes*™, page 22) can simulate the effect of a Siberys shard or Khyber shard.

Alternatively, you can replace the appropriate dragonshard with a gem or precious stone that you link to the desired plane. A diamond or sapphire, for example, could be connected to the Astral Sea; an opal with the Elemental Chaos; and amethyst or topaz to the world.

Dragonmark Reflection

It's easy to replace a dragonmark with a magical tattoo. The *strongheart tattoo* (*Adventurer's Vault*™ 2,

page 86) is a good choice to stand in for a Mark of Making, or you can devise tattoos with powers similar to dragonmarks.

Eberron Creatures

Familiars derived from natives of Eberron can readily be replaced by similar creatures found in your campaign world. A bantam fastieth could instead be another quick Tiny reptile, such as a needlefang drake (*Monster Manual*®, page 90). A minor foulspawn need not be connected to Xoriat but can be a Tiny version of another foulspawn from the *Monster Manual*, or any sort of weird aberrant creature. The lingering nightmare, instead of the residue of a quori possession, might be the echo of a night hag's dream haunting.

Warforged can exist in any setting, so familiars based on their components are not limited to Eberron. In a world without warforged, animated pieces of armor could work just as well.

Eberron Organizations

A few of these familiars refer to organizations unique to the world of Eberron, such as the Blood of Vol and the Silver Flame. However, nothing in their abilities requires that campaign setting to use. A crawling clot could be representative of a different necromantic organization, and a silver lamp could just as easily represent Pelor or Amaunator as the Silver Flame.

The Magebred Familiar feat requires membership in House Vadalis or the Mark of Handling as a prerequisite. In a non-Eberron campaign, you might replace these with Mounted Combat or membership in an organization that is similarly dedicated to enhancing natural beasts.

New Familiars

Each familiar description includes the benefits that familiar provides.

Constant Benefits: A familiar provides you with these benefits as long as it has at least 1 hit point, regardless of its current state.

Active Benefits: When your familiar is in active mode, in addition to taking the actions available to it in that mode, it provides its active benefits.

Heroic Tier Familiars

Bantam Fastieth **Familiar**

A bipedal lizard with powerful running legs, this creature is a smaller cousin of the Talenta mount.

Speed 8

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Athletics checks to jump.
You can make a running jump after moving only 1 square.

Active Benefits

Fastieth Activity: When you use a move action for any reason, you can move the bantam fastieth its speed.
Running Companion: When you start your turn adjacent to your familiar, you gain a +2 bonus to speed until the end of your turn.

Bloodthorn Vine Barb — Familiar

Inhabitants of Xen'drik sometimes transform the island's deadly vegetation into companions.

Speed 5 (forest walk)

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Heal checks.

You gain forest walk (you ignore difficult terrain if it's the result of trees, underbrush, plants, or natural growth).

Active Benefits

Bloodthorn Drain: Once per encounter as a free action, when you deal damage to an enemy adjacent to your bloodthorn vine barb, you gain 3 temporary hit points.

Level 11: 6 temporary hit points.

Level 21: 9 temporary hit points.

Clockwork Scorpion — Familiar

With a metallic clattering, this construct scuttles along beside you, stinger raised to inject its stored venom.

Senses tremorsense 5

Speed 6

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls to grab an enemy.

The clockwork scorpion contains a small reservoir that can store 1 dose of a poison or alchemical oil that you can apply to a weapon. You can refill it during a rest.

Active Benefits

Scorpion's Injection: Once per encounter, when you or an ally hits an enemy adjacent to the clockwork scorpion with a weapon attack, that attack benefits from the effect of the stored substance, which is consumed.

Dragonmark Reflection — Familiar

This tattoolike familiar is in the image of its master's Mark of Making, and it overlays the Mark of Making while passive.

Speed 2, fly 5 (hover)

Constant Benefits

You can perform the Arcane Mark ritual as a standard action for no cost, and other creation rituals require half the normal time for you.

You can create alchemical items one level higher than your level.

Active Benefits

Infuse Mark: When you use *healing infusion* on an ally adjacent to your dragonmark reflection, that ally regains 2 additional hit points (if you are using *curative admixture*) or gains 4 additional temporary hit points when the ally ends the AC bonus (if you are using *resistive formula*).

Level 11: 3 additional hit points or 6 additional temporary hit points.

Level 21: 4 additional hit points or 8 additional temporary hit points.

Floating Weapon — Familiar

An animate weapon hovers nearby to threaten your foes.

Speed 0, fly 6 (hover)

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Bluff and Intimidate checks.

Active Benefits

Defensive Stance: The floating weapon has a +2 bonus to all defenses.

Offensive Partner: When you hit an enemy adjacent to the floating weapon with a weapon attack, you can shift 1 square.

Gadfly — Familiar

This wee buzzing creation alerts your guardian to an incoming threat.

Speed fly 6

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Perception checks.

You gain a +2 bonus to skill checks for warding rituals.

Active Benefits

Gadfly's Bite: Any summoned ally adjacent to the gadfly gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls on opportunity attacks.

Magpie — Familiar

Natural thieves, these glossy black-and-white birds are the preferred companions of larcenous arcanists.

Speed 2, fly 6

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Perception and Thievery checks.

Active Benefits

Thieving Magpie: A magpie can make Thievery checks to pick pockets or use sleight of hand. It gains a +2 bonus to such checks.

Marmoset — Familiar

Some artificers seek these clever creatures from Xen'drik forests for their nimbleness and manual dexterity.

Speed 6, climb 6

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Acrobatics checks.

You gain a +2 bonus to skill checks for exploration rituals.

Active Benefits

Monkey Business: A marmoset can make Thievery checks to open locks or disable traps, gaining a +2 bonus to such checks. It can manipulate thieves' tools to gain an additional +2 bonus to such checks.

Octopus — Familiar

A master of camouflage that can squeeze into tiny spaces, an octopus is an ideal spy and assistant, especially to reavers of the Lhazaar Principalities.

Speed 2, swim 6 (aquatic)

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Stealth checks.

You can go 6 minutes before you must make Endurance checks to hold your breath, and you gain a +5 bonus to such checks.

Active Benefits

Octopus's Flexibility: An octopus can squeeze through gaps as small as half an inch wide.

Aquatic: While underwater, an octopus has a +5 bonus to Stealth checks.

Saddle Squire — Familiar

This tiny construct assistant resembles a jockey and carries a replica saddle on its back.

Speed 6

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Nature checks.

While you are mounted, your mount gains a +1 bonus to its speed.

Active Benefits

Saddle Assistance: As a minor action, you can mount or dismount a friendly mount adjacent to the saddle squire.

Soarwood Wings — Familiar

This animated set of wings clings to your back like a newly emerged butterfly.

Speed 2, fly 6 (hover)

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Athletics checks to jump.

You gain a +1 bonus to your fly speed, when you have one.

Active Benefits

Soarwood Lift: Once per encounter as a move action, your soarwood wings fly an adjacent ally (or you, if you are adjacent) up to 6 squares, then lower the creature gently to the ground.

Summoner Homunculus — Familiar

This entity is a collection of sprockets and wire that can spur on summoned creatures.

Speed 6

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Endurance checks.

You can perform the Unseen Servant ritual as a standard action for no cost, when you have no extant unseen servants. You do not need to master the ritual to use this benefit.

Active Benefits

Infuse Summoned: Any creature you have summoned gains a +1 bonus to all defenses and to attack rolls while adjacent to the summoner homunculus.

Tome Caddy — Familiar

The bent form of this tiny construct assistant supports a lectern.

Speed 6

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Arcana and Dungeoneering checks.

You can wield a tome in place of another kind of arcane implement you can use.

Active Benefits

Book Bearer: You can wield a tome as an implement without occupying either of your hands.

Summons Focus: Any creature you have summoned gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls while adjacent to the tome caddy.

Level 11: +3 bonus.

Level 21: +4 bonus.

Warforged Faceplate — Familiar

This tiny construct resembles the armored face of a warforged, and it clings to you with multiple jointed appendages.

Speed 4

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Intimidate checks.

You gain a +2 bonus to saving throws against ongoing damage.

Active Benefits

Warforged Watchfulness: While you are asleep, a warforged faceplate remains aware of its surroundings, allowing you to notice approaching enemies and other events as though you were awake.

Paragon Tier Familiars

Ambush Vine Shoot — Familiar

Inhabitants of the Xen'drik jungles bond with this climbing plant to exploit that environment's hazards.

Senses tremorsense 5

Speed 6, burrow 6

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Athletics checks.

When you climb or swim, add 1 to the distance you move on a successful Athletics check.

Active Benefits

Vine's Clasp: Enemies take a -2 penalty to saving throws to end the immobilized or restrained conditions while adjacent to the ambush vine shoot.

Crawling Clot — Familiar

Favored by the Blood of Vol, this strange companion is crafted from blood collected during the cult's sacraments.

Speed 4, climb 4 (spider climb)

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Heal checks.

You gain resist 5 necrotic. If you already have resist necrotic, increase it by 2. Your resist necrotic increases by 2 while you are bloodied.

Active Benefits

Clotting Factor: Once per day, if your crawling clot is adjacent to you or an ally when that character takes damage, you can allow your crawling clot to be destroyed so that character can spend a healing surge.

Dimensional Pet — Familiar

You imbue a homunculus with an elemental spirit that grants a bit of control over the space around you.

Speed 6

Constant Benefits

You can read and speak Primordial.

When you teleport, add 1 to the distance you teleport.

Active Benefits

Dimensional Lock: Once per encounter as an immediate interrupt, you can negate an attempt to teleport made by a creature adjacent to the dimensional pet. That creature cannot teleport again until the start of its next turn.

Living Infusion — **Familiar**

The bulging body of this strange homunculus resembles a flask.

Speed 4

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Heal checks.

You can perform rituals of the restoration category in half the casting time.

Active Benefits

Mobile Infusion: If the living infusion is adjacent to the target of your *healing infusion*, each ally adjacent to the target also regains 1d6 hit points.

Level 21: 2d6 hit points.

Minor Foulspawn — **Familiar**

This horror of Xoriat resembles an inside-out cat with three eyes and two mouths.

Senses darkvision

Speed 6

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Dungeoneering checks.

You gain a +2 bonus to saving throws against fear effects.

Active Benefits

Foulspawn Babble: Once per encounter as a free action, you can deal 1d10 extra psychic damage to a target adjacent to your minor foulspawn that you hit with an arcane attack power.

Level 21: 2d10 extra psychic damage.

Smith's Hammer — **Familiar**

This fine crafting tool assists in performing impromptu repairs or upkeep.

Speed 4

Constant Benefits

If you are an artificer, you begin each day with an additional use of your Arcane Empowerment class feature.

Active Benefits

Hammer's Ring: Once per encounter as an immediate interrupt, when an enemy makes an attack against you or an ally adjacent to your smith's hammer, you can grant a +2 bonus to a single defense of that character against the triggering attack. If the ally is a construct, the bonus increases to +3. Your smith's hammer is destroyed.

Tinker Feyling — **Familiar**

This diminutive sprite has a natural touch with magic items, making it a favorite of artificers.

Senses low-light vision

Speed 6

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Bluff and Thievery checks.

Active Benefits

Feyling's Reservoir: You can use your Arcane Empowerment class feature as a minor action to empower a weapon adjacent to the feyling. This does not grant you any additional uses of Arcane Empowerment.

Epic Tier Familiars

Lingering Nightmare — **Familiar**

Willing servants of the Dreaming Dark sometimes retain a memory of the quori that previously possessed them. That nightmare residue floats like a small cloud nearby, shimmering with its master's changing mood.

Senses darkvision

Speed 6, fly 6 (hover)

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Intimidate checks.

You gain resist 5 psychic. If you already have resist psychic, increase the resistance by 2.

Active Benefits

Nightmare Voice: When you hit an enemy adjacent to the lingering nightmare with a fear attack, roll 1d4 to determine the additional effect, which lasts until the end of your next turn.

1: The target is slowed.

2: The target takes a -2 penalty to Will.

3: The target grants combat advantage.

4. The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

Silver Lamp — **Familiar**

This floating censerlike lantern contains a mystic reflection of the Silver Flame.

Speed fly 8 (hover)

Constant Benefits

You gain a +2 bonus to Religion and Arcana checks.

You gain a +2 bonus to saving throws against effects created by demons.

Active Benefits

Silver Beams: As a minor action, you can cause the silver lamp to glow or to stop glowing. While glowing, it sheds bright light in its square and in a 10-square radius.

Glory of the Silver Flame: Once per encounter as a free action, you can deal 2d8 extra radiant damage to a demon target within the silver lamp's light that you hit with an arcane attack power.

New Familiar Feats

Artificers in particular often choose feats to enhance their familiars in the same way their infusions enhance allies.

Enlarge Familiar [Familiar]

Prerequisites: Artificer, Arcane Familiar feat, 16th-level or higher utility power

Benefit: The *enlarge familiar* power replaces one of your 16th-level or higher utility powers.

Enlarge Familiar **Feat Power**

Suddenly, what had seemed a harmless pet rears up to threaten your enemy.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Teleportation
Minor Action **Personal**
Requirement: Your familiar must be in its active state.
Effect: Until the start of your next turn, your familiar becomes a Small creature with hit points equal to your healing surge value and can flank enemies. It cannot otherwise make attacks. When this effect ends, your familiar teleports into your space and enters passive mode.

Free-Ranging Familiar [Familiar]

Prerequisites: 11th level, artificer, Arcane Familiar feat

Benefit: While in active mode, your familiar can exist up to 20 squares farther from you than normal.

Infused Familiar [Familiar]

Prerequisites: Artificer, Arcane Familiar feat, 10th-level or higher utility power

Benefit: The *infused familiar* power replaces one of your 10th-level or higher utility powers.

Infused Familiar **Feat Power**

You infuse your familiar with arcane energy, granting it the ability to render emergency aid.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Minor Action **Personal**
Requirement: It is your turn and your familiar must be in its active state.
Effect: You use *healing infusion*, but your familiar is the origin square for the effect.

Vigorous Familiar [Familiar]

Prerequisites: 11th level, artificer, Arcane Familiar feat, Mark of Handling feat or member of House Vadalis

Benefit: Your knowledge of House Vadalis's beast breeding techniques allows you to form your familiar with greater speed and resilience. Your familiar gains a +2 feat bonus to speed and a +1 feat bonus to AC.

Shardbound Familiar (Eberron) [Familiar]

Prerequisites: Arcane Familiar feat, 10th-level or higher utility power

Benefit: The *dragonshard shield* power replaces one of your 10th-level or higher utility powers.

Dragonshard Shield **Feat Power**

The embrace of the Dragon Between protects you both in time of need.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Immediate Interrupt **Personal**
Requirement: Your familiar must be in its active state.
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to your familiar hits you or your familiar
Targets: You and your familiar
Effect: Reduce the damage the triggering enemy does to you by 10, and your familiar takes no damage from the attack. After the attack is resolved, you and your familiar shift your speed and have phasing during this move.

Shardbound Familiar (Khyber) [Familiar]

Prerequisites: 11th level, Arcane Familiar feat

Benefit: Whenever you bloody an enemy adjacent to your active familiar with an arcane power, that enemy also takes ongoing 10 acid, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, or thunder damage (save ends).

Shardbound Familiar (Siberys) [Familiar]

Prerequisites: Arcane Familiar feat, 16th-level or higher utility power

Benefit: The *Siberys unleashed* power replaces one of your 16th-level or higher utility powers.

Siberys Unleashed **Feat Power**

The glory of the Dragon Above shines through your familiar in time of need.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Conjuration
Standard Action **Area** wall 8 within 20
Requirement: Your familiar must be in its active state.
Effect: Your familiar is destroyed. You conjure a wall of chill wind and brilliant light up to 4 squares high that lasts until the end of your next turn. The wall's origin square is the square the familiar occupied. The wall costs 2 additional squares to enter, and enemies take a –2 penalty to attack rolls against targets inside or on the other side of the wall. When an enemy starts its turn adjacent to or in the wall, you can slide that enemy up to 3 squares to a square also in or adjacent to the wall and the enemy is slowed until the end of its turn.
Sustain Minor: The effect persists.

New Magic Items

Artificers have extended their protective skills to items that can assist or protect familiars.

Safe Retreat **Level 15**

This compact case, jar, or pack provides a safe and comfortable environment for your arcane companion.

Wondrous Item 25,000 gp
Power (Daily ✦ Teleportation): Immediate Interrupt. *Trigger:* An attack reduces your familiar to 0 hit points or fewer. *Effect:* Your familiar teleports to the *safe retreat* and enters passive mode. It cannot enter active mode again until the end of the encounter.

Familiar Items

Familiar items are a subset of wondrous items that can be used only to enhance a familiar. A familiar is treated as having a single item slot, which can be used only to equip familiar items. Unless otherwise stated, a familiar can't normally carry or wield a magic item.

Familiar's Baldric **Level 3+**

This jeweled collar or harness identifies your familiar as belonging to you and extends your protection to it.

Lvl 3 680 gp Lvl 23 425,000 gp
Lvl 13 17,000 gp
Item Slot Familiar
Property: Your familiar gains a +1 item bonus to all defenses.
Level 13: +2 item bonus.
Level 23: +3 item bonus.

Familiar's Cowl **Level 12**

While cloaked in this dark velvet garment, your familiar avoids the notice of larger enemies.

Item Slot Familiar13,000 gp
Special: Your familiar must be in active mode.
Property: Your familiar gains cover against larger creatures whose space it occupies.
Power (Daily): Minor Action. Until the end of the encounter, your familiar becomes invisible.

Homing Collar **Level 15**

An enchanted gem in this studded neckpiece allows you to transport yourself instantly to your familiar's side.

Item Slot Familiar 25,000 gp
Power (Daily ✦ Teleportation): Move Action. You teleport to your familiar's space if your familiar is in a space you can occupy.

Familiar Bloodsmith

"My familiar is more than an extension of my will—it is my own flesh and blood."

Prerequisite: Artificer, familiar

You are a master tinker and can create construct familiars of such perfection that they are scarcely distinguishable from living creatures. Essentially homunculi, your familiars incorporate a tiny portion of your own life energy, distilled into a drop of your blood. This life link allows you to feel your familiar's pain and drives you to keep it safe and make it stronger. Others might think you strange because you spend so much time with your creations, but they don't understand: These are your children.

Your path features all relate to your familiar, and your powers work only if your familiar is in active mode. Since it's important that your familiar stick around if you want to make full use of it, take some familiar feats (from this article, the *Dragon* #374 article "Get Familiar," or from *Arcane Power*™, page 139) to increase its defenses and to gain other benefits.

Familiar Bloodsmith Path Features

Familiar Blood Bond (11th level): Your blood connection with your familiar gives you strengthening feedback while it is near. When you spend a

Others might think you strange because you spend so much time with your creations, but they don't understand: These are your children.

healing surge while your familiar is in its passive state, you regain additional hit points equal to your Constitution modifier.

Bloodsmith Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an arcane attack and your familiar is in active mode, you can make the attack originate from your familiar's space.

Second Familiar (16th level): You can have two familiars at once, such as a cat and an owl. One of your familiars must be heroic tier, but the other can be any sort that you are eligible to choose. You gain the constant benefits of only one familiar at a time and can switch as a minor action. If you retrain the Arcane Familiar feat to replace a familiar, you can replace both.

Familiar Bloodsmith Spells

Bloodbond Rebuke — Familiar Bloodsmith Attack 11

You scream in outrage at the foe that dares harm your familiar, driving it back.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic
Immediate Interrupt **Melee** 1
Special: The origin square of the attack is your familiar's square.
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to your familiar makes an attack that includes it as a target
Target: The triggering enemy
Attack: Intelligence vs. Will
Hit: 1d8 + Intelligence modifier + Constitution modifier psychic damage, and you push the target 2 squares.

Rescue Familiar — Familiar Bloodsmith Utility 12

As the attack slams into your familiar, you call it to your side.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Teleportation
Immediate Interrupt **Personal**
Trigger: An attack reduces your familiar to 0 hit points or fewer
Effect: Your familiar teleports to your square and enters passive mode.

Bloodbond Swarm — Familiar Bloodsmith Attack 20

Through your bond, you divide your familiar into a swarm of smaller servants that overwhelm your foes.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Conjuration, Implement, Zone
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 20 centered on your familiar's square
Requirement: Your familiar must be in active mode.
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d8 + Intelligence modifier damage.
Effect: Your familiar is destroyed, and the burst creates a zone of minute copies of the familiar that lasts until the end of your next turn. Each enemy that enters or starts its turn in the zone takes 15 damage and is slowed until the start of its next turn. As a move action, you can move the zone 2 squares. As a minor action, you can end the zone. When the zone ends, your familiar appears in a square of the zone.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

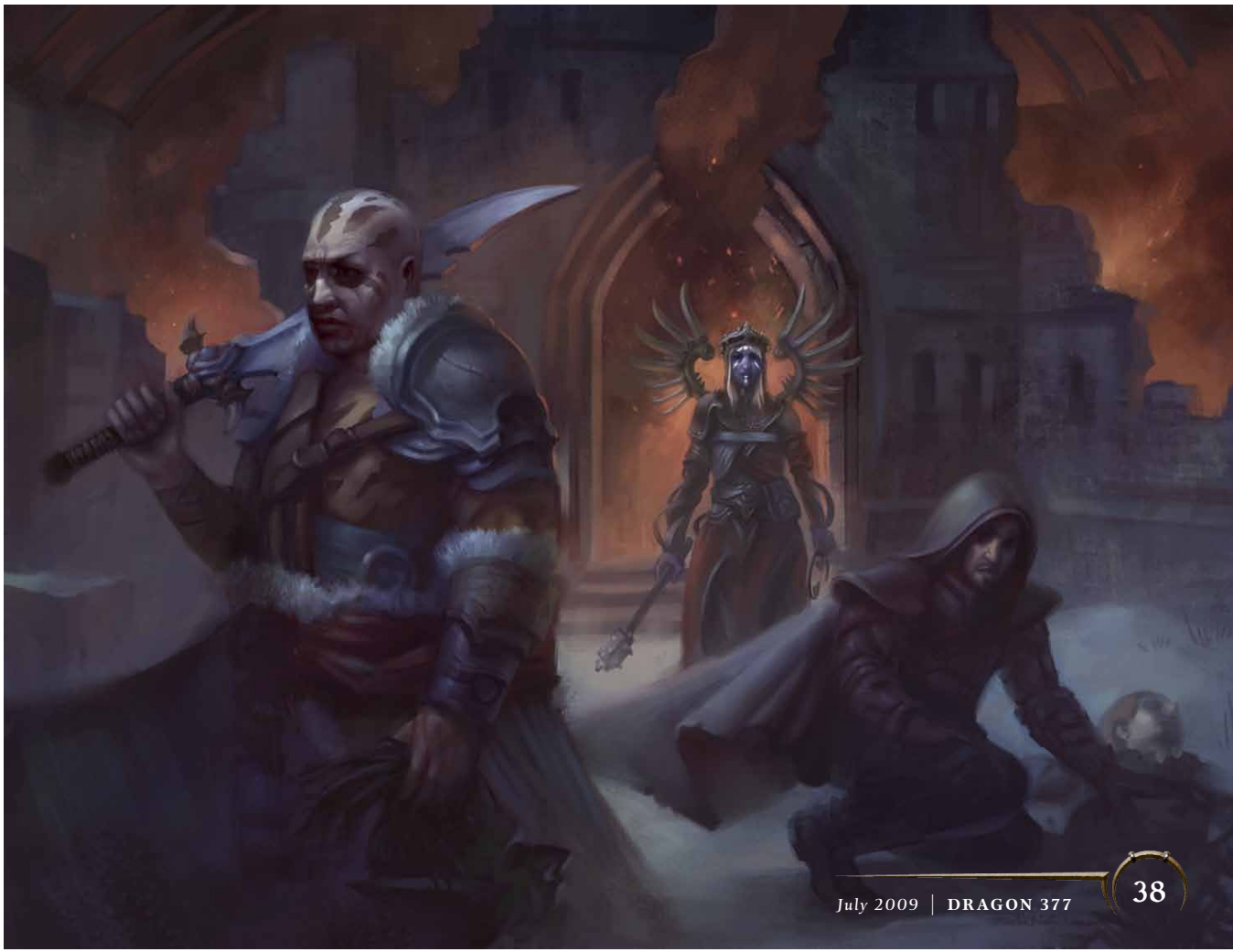
About the Author

Jennifer Clarke Wilkes has been editing just about everything at Wizards of the Coast since 1995, and does a fair bit of writing too. Her recent credits include *Draconomicon: Chromatic Dragons*™, *Divine Power*™, and *Wizards Presents*™: *Worlds and Monsters*. When not editing, she is gaming and feeding her inner goblin.

Disciples of Vengeance

by Robert J. Schwalb

illustration by Viktor Fetsch and Adam Paquette of Empty Room Studios



In a world littered with the rotting carcasses of fallen empires, justice is often a dim memory from a time when laws protected the innocent and punished the criminals. The tiny settlements enduring today keep the order's fires burning, but with each passing generation, the rot deepens, poisoning civilization's heart and threatening that one day, all that is good and noble in the world will be ashes and ruin.

The hero is often the only salvation the world has—a burning torch against the cloying darkness and the sword against the neck of tyranny—but many adventurers are fickle protectors. These heroes are drawn along by their destinies to combat evil's greatest champions, and this struggle can carry them beyond the beleaguered world to distant planes and other realities. If the hero cannot or will not stand for the common folk, who will?

Heroes are not the only agents in the natural world to oppose the brimming corruption. Others devote their lives to combating the evil stalking the lands. These organizations might welcome adventurers and heroes, but many are made up of ordinary folk who refuse to close their eyes against that which most folk fear. They stand fast, ready to heal the world with fire and sword.

"Disciples of Vengeance" describes one such group, revealing a growing power whose presence and influence now spreads across the world. As their name suggests, its members are those who avenge the fallen, who punish the immoral, and do the work once performed by kings and kingdoms, emperors and empires: They keep the peace when others fail.

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"There comes a time for each man and woman to make a choice. At this crossroad, a person must decide what they will do when injustice reveals itself. Will she cast a blind eye toward cruelty and malice, naively believing she will never suffer the same or does she reject tyranny and sacrifice her life to destroy it?"

—Sir Gerald Sersten, Knight of the Second Moon

The Disciples of Vengeance grew from dissatisfaction with fear, hatred of evil, and, above all, a desire to see justice restored to a land. When hidden cultists nearly destroyed the city of Beacon with unleashed plagues, the priests of Erathis, Pelor, and Kord, working with the city's Thieves' Guild, founded the Disciples as an antidote for what they saw was a spreading sickness in the world. In the century that followed, the Disciples have founded chapterhouses across the countryside, in cities, and in the wild. They see themselves as the light against the darkness, and as long as at least one of them lives, they fight.

Joining the Disciples of Vengeance

The Disciples of Vengeance has roots deep within religious organizations across the land and thus it derives most members from those who serve the gods. Typical members include clerics and paladins, but many avengers find the Disciples' mission to their liking as well. Beyond the divine champions, the Disciples welcome anyone with a burning desire to see wrongs righted and the guilty pay for their crimes. Casting such a wide net sees the Disciples recruiting from other walks, including shadowy assassins, cunning rogues, and ruthless hunters.

REQUIREMENTS

Alignment: Any non-evil
Skills: Training in Insight or Perception
Minor Quest: You must complete a minor quest to prove your suitability as a candidate. The quest might be hunting down and killing a known villain, disrupting a criminal syndicate, or protecting a community from an external (or internal) threat.

The Disciples of Vengeance were founded to combat evil by any means necessary. Many members believe restoring the rule of law is the surest means to fulfilling the organization's objective, but not all believe this. Some think the only way to attend to the growing darkness is to turn its tactics back on evil's perpetrators. As long as members fight wickedness, the organization doesn't look too closely into individual dealings.

Although its members all identify themselves with the larger organization, each Disciple operates within a smaller segment based on individual talents and interests. These subdivisions might work together from time to time, but they often work apart—so much so that they are often confused as separate entities.

The Disciples of Vengeance were founded to combat evil by any means necessary.

Crusaders

Battling evil requires foot soldiers to meet the enemy head-on. For this purpose, the Disciples founded the Crusaders, a knightly order committed to fighting evil at any cost, by any means. Nearly all members are warriors, because the Crusaders demand that candidates demonstrate their talents in mock battles and, later, through actual missions. Player characters who would join the Crusaders are usually paladins, but fighters, some rangers, avengers, barbarians, and clerics are welcome as well.

Crusaders are the organization's weapons, and as such, they undertake combat missions, putting their enemies to sword and flame. The Crusaders lack the numbers to organize into actual armies; instead, they travel the lands, working with likeminded allies or alone to battle the enemy. They might rouse small forces from townsfolk and farmers, recruit soldiers from local militias, and even call in cooperative military forces when faced with a difficult foe.

Watchers

Preparation can make all the difference in the struggle against evil, and the Watchers provide an invaluable service. Spies and assassins, Watchers infiltrate communities, searching for clues and listening for tips about cult activity, monstrous threats, and any other development they deem noteworthy. A Watcher can deal with a threat alone, slipping a knife between the ribs or dropping poison in a cup, but sometimes, when faced with an entrenched or mighty enemy, the Watcher reports to ranking members, supplying critical information to the Crusaders or Demagogues.

The Disciples fill Watcher positions with specialists. Thieves, actors, experts, and anyone with a useful talent can find a place in this segment. Player character rogues, rangers, bards, or warlocks who join the organization tend to become Watchers.

Watchers gather information for the Disciples. They are the organization's eyes and ears, and they position themselves where they can be of most use. Missions can be any number of intelligence-gathering operations, and agents might assume cover identities, steal treasures, perform acts of sabotage, or even murder in extreme cases.

Demagogues

The final branch in the Disciples of Vengeance is the Demagogues. As their name suggests, they are the rabble-rousers and agitators, and they are gifted with charisma and cunning. They can whip up crowds to violence, stir a rebellion against a wicked tyrant in an otherwise content community, and soften the hardest of hearts with their impassioned speeches.

Candidates with a talent for public speaking find places among the Demagogues. However, this branch is made up with more than just the firebrands. Sages and scholars also wind up here because they can teach other agents the specialized knowledge they need to defeat their adversaries. Wizards, invokers, bards, rogues, and clerics are but a few of the player character classes that might join the Demagogues.

When not researching or teaching, Demagogues might accompany other agents on missions. They negotiate with local officials, recruit new members to the cause, and build support from local populations. The Demagogues are the face of the Disciples of Vengeance.

Disciples of Vengeance Benefits

Membership in the Disciples of Vengeance has many benefits, with the foremost being an excellent avenue to new adventures. On missions, you might travel the world, visiting far-flung locations to root out evil's darkest servants. However, some benefits are exclusive to those who join the Disciples' cause.

Heroic Tier: Characters can requisition one *potion of healing* each level.

Paragon Tier: You are entitled to one free use of the Raise Dead ritual, either for yourself or for someone close to you who died while on a mission.

Epic Tier: You can exchange any one magic item you possess for any other magic item of an equal or lower level.

Rather than wait for the enemy tides to wash against civilization's shores, you are to confront them wherever they can be found.

Playing a Disciple of Vengeance

As a member of the Disciples of Vengeance, you are expected to go into the world and take the fight to evil. Rather than wait for the enemy tides to wash against civilization's shores, you are to confront them wherever they can be found. The enemy is an elusive threat, however, so you must be vigilant and suspicious of anyone you meet for harboring unclean thoughts or a devotion to evil powers.

Advancement

The organization offers advancement based on merit and nothing else. Those of common birth who prove the better with the sword can outstrip the sons and daughters of kings. How fast you rise and the responsibilities you gain are up to you. You might be content exploring the fetid dungeons, testing your mettle against cultists, necromancers, and demons of all kinds, or you might prefer greater authority, leading the organization to ultimate victory over evil's innumerable legions.

Most members are disciples, and all at this rank are equal regardless of which division the member is assigned. Above the disciples stand the apostles. These individuals oversee specific regions and monitor the disciples' activities within these areas. Apostles might undertake missions, too, but only the most important ones. Above the apostles stand the seraphim. These members rarely go on missions, and instead they manage agents in the field, organize operations, and monitor new threats to the civilized lands.

Missions

The Disciples all cleave to the core values upheld by the entire organization. Be watchful for the enemy, for it wears many masks. Destroy the darkness, lest it spread. And, protect the innocent, for in them is our hope for the future.

All missions involve one or more of these values and can include raids into enemy lands, striking settlements controlled by savage humanoids, or extracting powerful mages or priests for interrogation and execution by the Disciples. Other missions see Disciples following up reports on subversive activity

to determine if demonic agencies might be at work or to purge evil churches before they can take root. Aberrant creatures are also common targets, because they are a cancer to the natural world, unraveling the natural order and inviting madness and death.

In all cases, the Disciple must be merciless in his or her work, offering no quarter to the guilty and responding with swift and lethal force to any threat faced. Hesitation is weakness and the order regards any who doubt their cause to be enemies.

Resources

Each seraphim dwells in a chapterhouse where other disciples can gather, train, and recover from injuries. These strongholds are fortresses capable of withstanding sieges from armies without fear. Within the cavernous halls and endless rooms, one finds cells, libraries, training facilities, and arsenals—all accessible to disciples. A chapterhouse usually provides accommodations to visitors, but these rooms and kitchens are as spartan as the rest.

Members can make donations to the chapterhouse and gain magic items (up to their level) in exchange. Also, the chapterhouse supplies ritual scrolls for field missions as well as to attend accursed, injured, or dead agents. To gain these resources, a member can receive up to a 10% discount (DM's discretion) based on the member's needs.

Disciples of Vengeance in the World

"They see enemies everywhere, even in their friends. Their willingness to put anyone who disagrees with them to the sword is as much of a threat as the ones they claim to fight. Why just last week, two disciples blew through the town, but before they left, they hanged old Milos from the old oak tree and burned Liza for witchcraft. Sure, Milos was always a bit strange and locals say Liza danced with demons under the full moon, but where's the proof?"

—Edmund Cree, Fearful Peasant

The Disciples of Vengeance are a relentless force in the world, never flinching, never giving up, and pursuing their enemies no matter the cost. The Disciples use any tactics, even dubious ones, to defeat their foes. They are not above misdirection, treachery, and even the very tools of evil if they help destroy their enemies. The Disciples all believe the ends justify the means.

The Disciples see most player characters as potential recruits. They recognize heroic capabilities and gladly add new assets to the organization's arsenal.

The Disciples use any tactics, even dubious ones, to defeat their foes.

Goodwill might shift to suspicion if a Disciple's invitation is rebuffed and, if not handled carefully, PCs can find lifelong enemies in this organization even if they lead unimpeachable careers.

Reputation

No one denies that the Disciples of Vengeance have the best intentions—at least people never deny it to their faces—but many wonder if these vigilantes and self-appointed judges do more harm than good. For all the cultists, fiends, and humanoids the Disciples destroy or drive out, bystanders suffer as well. The enemy knows the Disciples will not stop, causing many sinister groups to wreak as much havoc as they can before the Disciples close in for the kill. Worse, the Disciples are not infallible, and zeal sometimes blinds them to their victims' innocence. In all, the Disciples' appearance is a bad omen and when they drift into a community, those who know of them and their work expect to suffer before these vigilantes leave.

Disciples of Vengeance Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful History or Religion check.

DC 10: The Disciples of Vengeance is an aggressive organization committed to rooting out and destroying evil's agents. They are a suspicious lot and when they scent their quarry, they do not easily give up.

DC 20: The Disciples have strong ties to the churches of Erathis, Kord, and Pelor, and other temples might support their efforts too.

DC 25: The Disciples comprise three separate orders. The Crusaders are the most common, representing the organization's military branch. The Demagogues are the instructors, administrators, and spokespeople for the Disciples, using their natural charisma and fervent beliefs to whip up commoners to serve their needs. Finally, the Watchers are the spies. Assassins and informants, they lurk within communities undetected, sending information back to their chapterhouse and eliminating anyone they deem a threat.

Adapting the Disciples of Vengeance

As written, the Disciples of Vengeance make for a good tool to unite an adventuring party to a common cause, providing an easy way to introduce new adventurers and carry the heroes across the countryside. However, the Disciples can also work against the PCs. Known for being overzealous, the Disciples might identify the adventurers as threats and harry them periodically over the campaign, serving as nagging foils.

You might play up the group's sinister overtones, having them burn and execute anyone they accuse of being tainted. The Disciples could be self-righteous tyrants or could be corrupted within, perhaps infiltrated by Asmodeus's cult to turn the organization to the dark god's wicked agenda.

In the Forgotten Realms, the Disciples might have emerged as a result of the Spellplague, and they could focus their efforts on those who misuse or warp magic for fell purposes. In Eberron, the Disciples could easily operate within Thrane as another extremist serving the Silver Flame.

Disciples of Vengeance

Whether as allies or enemies, the Disciples are a powerful force in the land and their appearance heralds dark times.

Firebrand Crusader

The most common Disciples are the crusaders. Veteran warriors, they have sworn oaths of service and set out into the world to find the enemy and put it to the sword.

Firebrand Crusader	**Level 8 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 350
Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +4	
HP 88; **Bloodied** 44	
AC 24; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 20	
Speed 5	
⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+15 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the crusader's next turn.	
⸸ **Crusader's Mercy** (opportunity action, when an enemy marked by the crusader moves or shifts; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+15 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
⸸ **Immolate the Unclean** (standard; requires torch; encounter) ✦ **Fire, Weapon**	
+13 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 5 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).	
⸸ **Torch** (minor 1/round; at-will) ✦ **Fire, Weapon**	
+13 vs. Reflex; 1d4 fire damage.	
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common	
Str 21 (+9) **Dex** 10 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+4)	
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 8 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+7)	
Equipment plate armor, longsword, 4 torches, flint and steel	

Firebrand Crusader Tactics

The firebrand crusader engages the closest enemy, using the threat of *crusader's mercy* to keep the target pinned down. Should the enemy flee, the crusader trips up the foe and uses *immolate the unclean* on its following turn.

Skulking Watcher

The Disciples dispatch skulking watchers to gather intelligence about enemy organizations. Working alone or in small groups, they uncover the most guarded secrets.

Skulking Watcher **Level 8 Skirmisher**
Small natural humanoid, halfling XP 350

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 83; **Bloodied** 41
AC 22; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 20; see also *nimble reaction*
Saving Throws +5 against fear effects
Speed 6

Katar (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+13 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage (crit 1d6 + 11) and the skulking watching shifts 1 square.

Shortbow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +13 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.

Combat Advantage
A skulking watcher deals 2d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Watcher's Scrutiny (minor; ⚄ ⚅)
Close burst 5; targets one creature in burst the skulking watcher has concealment or cover against; the skulking watcher gains combat advantage against the target until the end of its turn.

Nimble Reaction
Halflings gain a +2 racial bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.

Second Chance (immediate interrupt, when the skulking watcher would be hit by an attack; encounter)
The skulking watcher forces the attacker to reroll the attack and take the new result.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common
Skills Acrobatics +16, Stealth +14, Thievery +16
Str 9 (+3) **Dex** 21 (+9) **Wis** 16 (+7)
Con 11 (+4) **Int** 16 (+7) **Cha** 11 (+4)
Equipment leather armor, katar, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows

Skulking Watcher Tactics

The skulking watcher skirts the battlefield, staying out of sight so that it can benefit from combat advantage, whether from being hidden or from using *watcher's scrutiny.*

Zealous Demagogue

Demagogues use stirring speeches and inciting sermons to raise a community up against their enemies. They can fill their allies with fiery zeal, pushing them to acts of bloodthirsty violence.

Zealous Demagogue **Level 10 Controller (Leader)**
Medium immortal humanoid, deva XP 500

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +8
HP 101; **Bloodied** 50
AC 24; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 24; see also *astral majesty*
Resist 10 radiant
Speed 5

Mace (standard; at-will) ✦ **Radiant, Weapon**
+15 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage, and each enemy adjacent to the target takes 5 radiant damage. Also, each enemy that takes damage from this attack is marked by an ally within 5 squares of the demagogue until the end of the demagogue's next turn.

Reveal the Guilty (minor 1/round; at-will) ✦ **Radiant**
Close burst 5; one creature; +14 vs. Will; 1d8 + 1 radiant damage, and the target grants combat advantage to all enemies until the end of the demagogue's next turn.

Regroup (standard; encounter) ✦ **Healing**
Ranged 5; one ally; the target spends a healing surge and can shift 1 square as a free action.

Destroy the Heretic (standard; ⚄ ⚄ ⚅)
Close burst 10; targets up to three allies; the target makes a melee basic attack as a free action against an adjacent enemy. An ally that hits also knocks its target prone.

Memory of a Thousand Lifetimes (when the demagogue makes an attack roll, saving throw, a skill check, or an ability check and dislikes the result; encounter)
The zealous demagogue rolls 1d6 and adds the result to the triggering roll.

Astral Majesty
The zealous demagogue gains a +1 bonus to all defenses against attacks made by bloodied creatures.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven
Skills Diplomacy +16, History +15, Insight +13, Religion +13
Str 12 (+6) **Dex** 10 (+5) **Wis** 17 (+8)
Con 13 (+6) **Int** 17 (+8) **Cha** 22 (+11)
Equipment chainmail, light shield, mace, holy symbol

Zealous Demagogue Tactics

The zealous demagogue prefers to lead from behind its allies, commanding them to strike by using *reveal the guilty* to choose the target and *destroy the heretic* to get its allies to wipe out the enemy on its behalf.

Encounter Groups

The Disciples of Vengeance depend on local levies to build up their forces to deal with enemy groups. Most Disciples round up militia and townsfolk, deputizing them for a specific mission. Those who fall in service to the cause are acceptable, though regrettable losses.

Level 6 Encounter (XP 1,250)
✦ 10 human lackeys (level 7 minion; *Monster Manual* page 162)
✦ 1 zealous demagogue (level 10 controller)

Level 8 Encounter (XP 1,800)
✦ 2 firebrand crusaders (level 8 soldier)
✦ 10 human lackeys (level 7 minion; *Monster Manual* page 162)
✦ 1 skulking watcher (level 8 skirmisher)

HEROIC TIER FEATS

Name	Prerequisites	Benefit
Courageous Example	—	Successful save grants ally +4 bonus to ally's next saving throw
Crusader's Fury	—	Opportunity attacks deal extra damage while adjacent to a bloodied ally
Divine Passion	Avenger	Beneficiary of *divine guidance* deals extra radiant damage
Human Resolve	Human	Gain temp hit points with action point
Hunting Beast	Ranger, Beast Mastery	Deny concealment to enemies adjacent to your beast companion.
Majestic Fervor	Bard, trained in Religion	+1 attacks to non-bloodied target of *majestic word*
Radiant Rage	Barbarian	Extra radiant damage when spends a surge
Righteous Fury	Trained in Intimidate	–2 to melee basic attack to gain rattling keyword
Undeniable Crusader	Fighter	Combat Challenge attacks ignore resistances
Wrenching Abjuration	Avenger	Slide instead of pull with *abjure undead*

PARAGON TIER FEATS

Name	Prerequisites	Benefit
Retributive Action	Fighter	Spend action point; deal +2[W] damage with Combat Challenge
Sniper's Aim	Ranger, trained in Perception	Deal Hunter's Quarry damage on a miss with daily attack
Unfailing Courage	—	Spend healing surge when you spend an action point

EPIC TIER FEATS

Name	Prerequisites	Benefit
Fires of Heaven	Any divine class	Ongoing radiant damage also deals ongoing fire damage
Limning Challenge	Paladin	Marked targets cannot benefit from concealment or total concealment
Righteous Challenge	Paladin	Demons and devils you mark take –2 penalty to all attack rolls

FEATS

The Disciples of Vengeance train their followers in many techniques that are also available to heroes and useful to a broad range of character classes.

Heroic Tier Feats

These feats are available to any character who meets the prerequisites.

Courageous Example

Benefit: Whenever you succeed on a saving throw to end an effect, the next ally to make a saving throw within 5 squares of you before the start of your next turn gains a +4 bonus to that saving throw.

Crusader's Fury

Benefit: While adjacent to a bloodied ally, your opportunity attacks deal extra damage equal to your Charisma modifier.

Divine Passion

Prerequisite: Avenger

Benefit: When you use *divine guidance* and the triggering ally hits its target, the ally deals an additional 5 radiant damage.

At 21st level, the ally deals an extra 10 radiant damage.

Human Resolve

Prerequisite: Human

Benefit: Whenever you spend an action point to make an attack, you gain temporary hit points equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

Hunting Beast

Prerequisites: Ranger, Beast Mastery class feature

Benefit: You and your beast companion ignore penalties to attack rolls from concealment against enemies adjacent to your beast companion.

Majestic Fervor

Prerequisites: Bard, trained in Religion

Benefit: If the target of your *majestic word* is not bloodied, it also gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

Radiant Rage

Prerequisite: Barbarian

Benefit: When you spend a healing surge while you are raging, the next melee attack you make before the end of your next turn deals extra radiant damage equal to your Charisma modifier on a hit.

Righteous Fury

Prerequisite: Trained in Intimidate

Benefit: When making a melee basic attack, you can choose to take a –2 penalty to your attack roll to add the rattling keyword to your attack.

Undeniable Crusader

Prerequisite: Fighter

Benefit: Attacks granted to you by your Combat Challenge class feature ignore all resistances.

Wrenching Abjuration

Prerequisite: Avenger

Benefit: When you hit with your *abjure undead* class feature, you can slide the target instead of pulling the target, but it must end the forced movement closer to you than where it began.

Paragon Tier Feats

These feats are available to any character who is 11th level or higher and meets the prerequisites.

Retributive Action

Prerequisites: 11th level, fighter

Benefit: You can spend an action point as a free action when an enemy you marked triggers your Combat Challenge class feature and you hit with the attack. Your attack deals +2[W] damage.

Sniper's Aim

Prerequisites: 11th level, ranger, trained in Perception

Benefit: Whenever you miss with a daily ranger attack against your quarry, you can choose to apply your Hunter's Quarry damage. You can still deal Hunter's Quarry damage only once per round.

Unfailing Courage

Prerequisite: 11th level

Benefit: When you spend an action point, you can also spend a healing surge.

Epic Tier Feats

These feats are available to any character who is 21st level or higher and meets the prerequisites.

Fires of Heaven

Prerequisites: 21st level, any divine class

Benefit: Whenever one of your divine attacks deals ongoing radiant damage, the target also takes ongoing fire damage equal to half the ongoing radiant damage, and for the same duration.

Limning Challenge

Prerequisites: 21st level, paladin

Benefit: Your attacks against targets marked by you with *divine challenge* or your divine sanction ignore penalties from concealment or total concealment.

Righteous Challenge

Prerequisites: 21st level, paladin

Benefit: Demons or devils marked by your *divine challenge* class feature or your divine sanction take a –2 penalty to all attack rolls.

Relics of Vengeance

The Disciples of Vengeance have a large arsenal at their disposals, and each chapterhouse boasts magic weapons, armor, shields, symbols, and more. While these tools are important, there are a few items the Disciples cherish above all others. Whether the Disciples still possess them is another matter entirely.

Answerer

A fine broadsword of exquisite craftsmanship, this heavy blade features a runic inscription in the fuller that names the weapon as *Answerer.* Two roaring lions serve as a crossbar, and the handle, wrapped in bloodstained leather, ends at a glittering emerald held in a clawed fist.

Ages ago, a master artisan forged a mighty weapon as a gift to his liege. He named the sword *Agarach,* which means "final word" in an ancient tongue of humanity. So impressed was the lord with this mighty weapon the he demanded the artisan to forge nine copies. The names of each, as well as the deeds performed by those who wielded them, echo from the past still, but many have been lost–vanished into the Underdark or buried in dragons' lairs. In the ages since, lesser copies of these rare weapons surface from time to time, but none of these will ever equal the legacy in these arms.

Quest

Lost Blade: *Answerer* found its way into the Disciples' hands two decades ago and the first crusader to wield it was the virtuous Alhanzer, a holy knight and merciless crusader against evil. The knight and his weapon were lost when they challenged a despotic stone giant in its mountain fastness.

Answerer **Level 20+**

Its name engraved in the weapon's blade, Answerer ensures you have the last word in battle.

Lvl 20 +4 125,000 gp Lvl 30 +6 3,125,000 gp
Lvl 25 +5 625,000 gp
Weapon: Heavy blade
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Property: While you are bloodied, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with attacks using this weapon.
Power (Daily): Immediate Reaction. *Trigger:* An enemy hits you with a melee attack. *Effect:* You make a melee basic attack against the triggering enemy. On a hit, you also push the enemy 2 squares.

Crook of Remembrance

The Disciples recovered the *crook of remembrance* when a team stormed a crumbling stronghold used by exiles and outcasts who gathered to worship Cahtaeflox the Unclean, a hideous demon lord of the Seventy-Six Plagues. The Disciples burned out the infestation and purified the site, but they learned later that the stronghold, tucked in a shelf in the side of a deep chasm, had stood since the world was young. Some exploration revealed early holy servants used it as a place of study and introspection. Among the few surviving treasures, the Disciples uncovered this odd shepherd's crook.

The *crook of remembrance* is a tall staff of smooth white wood, but tiny black writing covers every surface, from its butt to the tip of the curling hook at the top. The writing includes invocations for divine justice to avenge those who have fallen and those mortals its original wielder failed to protect.

Quest

The Spirit Within: The Disciples stored the *crook of remembrance* in one of the chapterhouses along with various other treasures they had recovered. Its removal from the old fortress stirred the spirit within the staff and it rests uneasily in the dark vault. The staff, in its dim awareness, senses a coming apocalypse and calls out to find a worthy wielder.

Crook of Remembrance **Level 18+**

Burned into this wooden shepherd's crook is an endless litany recounting the crimes against mortals.

Lvl 18 +4 85,000 gp Lvl 28 +6 2,125,000 gp
Lvl 23 +5 425,000 gp
Implement (Staff)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Property: You gain an item bonus to Insight and Intimidate checks equal to the item's enhancement bonus.
Power (Daily): Immediate Reaction. *Trigger:* An enemy reduces an ally you can see to 0 hit points or fewer. *Effect:* You push each enemy adjacent to that ally 3 squares away from the ally.

Empyreal Breastplate

The *empyreal breastplate* is part of a larger suit of warplate armor (masterwork plate). The other components are impressive specimens of craftsmanship and design, but the breastplate draws the eye. Forged from gleaming white metal, the surface bears relief carvings depicting an angelic host blowing trumpets over a mountain of demonic skulls. In the center is a rising sun, suggesting a new and sublime peace.

The first to wear the *empyreal breastplate* was Allara, a deva paladin best remembered for slaying the undead dragon of Durgen's Grotto in the defense of Dyreton. After the heroic victory, Allara joined the Disciples and eventually founded her own chapterhouse overlooking the community she saved ages ago. It's believed the armor is there still.

Quest

Heir Returned? Legend holds Allara would return when the world was in the greatest need and don her armor once more in the land's defense. When the warplate vanishes, its keepers believe the legends have come true, but not all are convinced and some suspect foul play.

Empyreal Breastplate **Level 19+**

The most interesting component in this full suit of armor is the breastplate which bears the likeness of trumpeting angels and vanquished demons.

Lvl 19 +4 105,000 gp Lvl 29 +6 2,625,000 gp
Lvl 24 +5 525,000 gp
Armor: Plate
Enhancement: AC
Property: While bloodied, you gain resist 20 necrotic.
Level 24 or 29: Resist 30 necrotic.
Power (Daily): Immediate Reaction. *Trigger:* An enemy hits you with a necrotic attack. *Effect:* You deal 5 radiant damage to each enemy within 3 squares of you and push each such enemy 1 square.
Level 24 or 29: 10 radiant damage.

Paragon Paths

The Disciples of Vengeance welcome adventurers from a wide range of backgrounds and occupations. Those who join and continue to serve when they enter the paragon tier might find any of the following paragon paths useful toward continuing the struggle against evil.

Vengeful Crusader

"I am the righteous sword—the heaven's blade—and there is no escaping the painful truth of what you have done."

Prerequisites: Paladin, trained in Insight or Perception

Hate burns hot in your heart—hate for all those who prey on the weak and who despoil the innocent. Hate for all those who know nothing but evil. You channel this blazing wrath into your attacks to ensure the perpetrators pay for their crimes. Those who raise your ire can expect no mercy from you—only death.

Vengeful Crusader Features

Vengeance's Imperative (11th level): When an enemy marked by you makes an attack that doesn't include you as the target, you can shift 1 square toward that enemy after the attack as a free action.

Vengeful Action (11th level): Whenever you spend an action point while you are bloodied, you can subject each enemy you can see within 3 squares of you to your divine sanction until the end of your next turn.

Vengeful Shield (16th level): Enemies that attack allies adjacent to you take damage equal to your Strength modifier.

Vengeful Crusader Powers

Driving Force — Vengeful Crusader Attack 11

Your enemy falls back under your ferocious attack, but if it thinks it can escape your wrath, it is mistaken.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature you have marked
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares. If the target makes an attack that doesn't include you before the start of your next turn, you can make a charge attack against the target as an immediate interrupt.

Crusader's Stance — Vengeful Crusader Utility 12

As your enemies attack, your anger only grows, filling you with righteous indignation that you can use to punish them for their transgressions.

Daily ✦ Divine, Stance
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the stance ends, when an ally you can see takes damage from an enemy's attack, you gain a +1 bonus to your next attack roll and damage roll before the end of your next turn. This bonus is cumulative, to a maximum of +5.

Crusader's Vengeance — Vengeful Crusader Attack 20

Your hate guides your attack and delivers a punishing strike that reverberates for the final moments the enemy has left to live.

Daily ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 4[W] + Strength modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, when the target makes an attack that does not include you, it takes damage equal to your Strength modifier.

Watcher of Vengeance

"You cannot hide your crimes, because they are written in your words, your body, and your actions.

Prerequisite: Avenger, trained in Insight or Perception

Evil wears many masks, adopts many guises, but you make it your business to peer through the illusions and see things as they truly are. You skulk through the shadows, blending into the night to observe the guilty and learn their secrets. Each word and each action reveals strengths and weaknesses, giving you the tools to overcome them when the time is right to strike.

Watcher of Vengeance Features

Watcher's Insight (11th level): You gain a +2 bonus to Insight, Perception, and Stealth checks. You also gain a +2 bonus to saving throws against charm, fear, and illusion effects.

Vengeful Action (11th level): When an enemy you have combat advantage against hits an ally you can see, you can spend an action point as an immediate interrupt to make a basic attack against that enemy. If the attack hits, you deal an extra 2d6 damage.

Witnessed Weakness (16th level): When you have any concealment or cover and an enemy misses you with an attack, you gain combat advantage against that enemy until the end of your next turn.

Whisper of Vengeance Powers

Hidden Danger — Watcher of Vengeance Attack 11

You attack with nothing more than a whisper, cutting through your enemy and its defenses in one deadly attack.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** or **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature from which you are hidden
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC; if you are hidden when you attack, you remain hidden after the attack.
Hit: 3[W] + Wisdom modifier damage

Clarity of Purpose — Watcher of Vengeance Utility 12

By suffering your enemy's attack, you gain a renewed sense of purpose and a clear vision of how this foe can be stopped.

Daily ✦ Divine
Immediate Reaction **Personal**
Trigger: You are damaged by an attack
Effect: You take a move or a minor action. Until the end of the encounter, whenever the triggering attacker hits an ally, you gain a +2 bonus to your next attack roll against it.

Just Punishment — Watcher of Vengeance Attack 20

You strike your foe in such a way that if it strikes back, its wounds worsen, and if it does nothing, it invites disaster.

Daily ✦ Divine, Reliable, Weapon
Immediate Reaction **Personal**
Trigger: You are damaged by an attack
Effect: You make an avenger at-will weapon attack or melee basic attack. On a hit, that attack deals 2[W] extra damage and you can teleport 3 squares. If the attack misses, this power is not expended.

Zealous Demagogue

"Repent! Your doom is at hand! Evil's hold lasts only as long as you permit it. Cast off its despicable touch and embrace the light of truth!"

Prerequisite: Cleric or invoker, trained in Insight or Perception

The world stands on destruction's precipice, teetering as mortals abandon the gods for personal gain and the false promises of iniquity. Demons clamber and claw to violate the natural world, while wicked devils seduce and mislead mortals, binding their souls in unspeakable contracts. Shapechangers and aberrants hide in plain sight, concealing their hideous appearances and horrible agendas behind pleasant masks. Mortals must be warned against this growing corruption—must be shown their errors so they can repent and offer prayers and strength to the gods. And if they don't listen and don't submit to your divine missive, then it falls to you and your allies to contain their disbelief by whatever means are necessary.

Zealous Demagogue Features

Captivating Presence (11th level): You gain a +2 bonus to Diplomacy, Insight, and Intimidate checks. Also, all allies who can see you gain a +2 bonus to saving throws against charm and fear effects.

Zealous Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, each ally within 3 squares of you who can see you gains temporary hit points equal to one-half your level and a +2 bonus to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

Martyr's Blood (16th level): While you are bloodied, each ally that can see you gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws.

Zealous Demagogue Powers

Fanatic Charge Zealous Demagogue Attack 11

You remind an ally of his or her purpose and fill this ally with a fanatic's zeal.

Encounter
Standard Action **Close** burst 5
Target: One ally in burst who can see you
Effect: The target makes a charge attack as a free action against an enemy you choose. On a hit, the target deals +1[W] damage.

Imperiled Leader Zealous Demagogue Utility 12

You have nothing to fear, even when the enemy closes in for the kill.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Immediate Interrupt **Close** burst 5
Trigger: An adjacent enemy targets you with a melee attack
Target: One ally in the burst who can see you
Effect: The ally shifts 4 squares to a square adjacent to you. The triggering attack targets the ally instead of you. If the enemy's attack hits, you regain the use of *fanatic charge*.

Sudden Conversion Zealous Demagogue Attack 20

Your words strike a chord with the enemy and bring it to your side for a few moments.

Daily ✦ Charm, Divine, Implement
Standard Action **Close** burst 10
Target: One enemy that can see and hear you
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: The target is dominated (save ends). The target has a –2 penalty to saving throws against this effect.
Aftereffect: The target is weakened (save ends).
Miss: The target is dazed and weakened (save ends both).

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is a freelance game designer with over one hundred design and development credits to his name. His most recent works include the *Player's Handbook® 2*, *P2: Demon Queen's Enclave™*, *Manual of the Planes®*, *Martial Power™*, *Draconomicon™ I: Chromatic Dragons*, the *Forgotten Realms® Player's Guide*, and numerous articles in Dragon® and Dungeon® magazines. Robert lives in Tennessee with his wife Stacee and his crack kill-team of ninja cats.

Bestiary: Big Trouble

by Logan Bonner
illustrations by Michael Franchina, and Empty Room Studios artist - Vince Chui and Adam Paquette

From titans that soar through the sky tossing thunderbolts to the massive demons that dwell deep in the Abyss, mammoth creatures populate all regions of the Dungeons & Dragons® *world. This article gives you more options for using existing Huge creatures throughout paragon and epic levels. There are high-level elites turned into lower-level solos, and vice-versa. Each monster has a twist in its storyline so that it plays differently than a normal monster of the type would if it had its level increased or decreased.*

All the monsters in this article also appear in the Dungeons & Dragons *Miniatures Monster Manual: Legendary Evils set, the first batch of minis where all the Huges are visible in the boosters!*

Giant

The following giants provide you with some interesting options for encounters.

Frost Titan Avalanche

Though its power could be even greater than that of other frost titans, a frost titan avalanche is uncontrolled and untrained. Its attacks and defenses are sloppy, but because it has volatile powers, the danger it poses should not be underestimated.

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Frost Titan Avalanche **Level 14 Solo Brute**
Huge elemental humanoid (cold, giant) XP 5,000

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +12
Icy Terrain (Cold) aura 2 (or 5 while bloodied); enemies treat the aura's area as difficult terrain.
HP 568; **Bloodied** 284; see also *bloodied backlash*
AC 28; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 26
Resist 15 cold
Saving Throws +5
Speed 8 (ice walk)
Action Points 2

Slam (standard; at-will) ✦ **Cold**
Reach 3; +17 vs. AC; 2d10 + 6 cold damage. On a critical hit, the target also takes ongoing 10 cold damage (save ends).

Frost Spike (minor; at-will) ✦ **Cold**
Ranged 20; +15 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 6 cold damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the frost titan avalanche's next turn.

Avalanche Rampage (standard action; must be bloodied; at-will)
The frost titan avalanche shifts its speed and can enter enemies' spaces. The titan makes a slam attack against each enemy whose space it enters.

Bloodied Backlash (free, when first bloodied; encounter)
Freezing backlash recharges, and the frost titan avalanche uses it. The attack is a close burst 10 when triggered this way.

Cascading Avalanche (standard; ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Cold**
Close blast 8; +15 vs. Fortitude; 3d10 + 6 damage, and the target is knocked prone. *Miss:* Half damage.

Freezing Backlash (immediate reaction, when hit by an attack; ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Cold**
Close burst 2 (5 while bloodied); +15 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target is restrained and takes ongoing 5 cold damage (save ends both). *Aftereffect:* The target is slowed (save ends).

Threatening Reach
A frost titan avalanche can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (3 squares).

Glacial Footing
When an effect pulls, pushes, or slides a frost titan avalanche, the titan moves 4 squares less than the effect specifies. Also, a frost titan avalanche can make a saving throw to avoid being knocked prone.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Giant, Primordial
Skills Athletics +19

Str 24 (+14)	**Dex** 15 (+9)	**Wis** 20 (+12)
Con 22 (+13)	**Int** 10 (+7)	**Cha** 13 (+8)

Frost Titan Avalanche Tactics

A savage creature that lashes out with its bare hands, a frost titan avalanche possesses all the strength and magic of other frost titans, but none of their martial skill. It attacks anyone who comes near, and tosses frost spikes at everybody else. At the start of the battle, the titan throws a *frost spike*, then moves and charges the nearest enemy. After it moves close to foes, it batters them with *cascading avalanche* and *freezing backlash*. Enemies who stay at range annoy the titan, and it doesn't mind soaking up a couple of opportunity attacks to use frost spike on creatures that keep targeting it with ranged or area attacks (especially fire attacks). Between its aura and *threatening reach*, it's easy for the titan to lock down melee combatants. However, the titan gets bored easily and moves on to other areas of the battlefield (especially if it's bloodied and can use *avalanche rampage*).

Frost Titan Avalanche Lore

Arcana DC 22: Some frost titans, known as avalanches, attack with only their fists and innate cold magic. They're brutish and wild—feral. In addition to their overpowering melee attacks, frost titan avalanches can summon ice and snow to bury or freeze their enemies.

Encounter Groups

Though usually encountered alone, frost titan avalanches sometimes join with elementals or animals, serving as a pack leader of sorts.

Level 16 Encounter (XP 7,000)
✦ 1 frost titan avalanche (level 14 solo brute)
✦ 2 winter wolves (level 14 skirmisher, *Monster Manual 2* page 210)

Storm Titan Thunder Tempest

Solitary wanderers, storm titan thunder tempests transform themselves into great storm clouds that float over the world or through largely uninhabited areas of the Elemental Chaos.

Storm Titan Thunder Tempest Tactics

The titan has two forms, so monitor the powers of each. Here's a short list for easier reference:

Humanoid Form: Bolt whip, hurl thunderbolt, *leaping spark, booming bellow, lightning flesh, thunder tempest, blood storm.*

Cloud Form: *Sheet of lightning, blood storm.*

Whenever it can, the titan switches to its cloud form and fires a *sheet of lightning*. Mix up the order of the titan's actions. Sometimes use *thunder tempest* followed by *sheet of lightning* (ending the turn in humanoid form), and other times have the titan attack in humanoid form, then transform to cloud form until it's the titan's turn again.

While in humanoid form, the titan keeps moving by using *leaping spark*. If it needs to move out of close combat, it uses *leaping spark* to make a melee attack against someone in reach, teleports away, and uses *hurl thunderbolt*, then uses its move action to fly away

Storm Titan Thunder tempest Lore

Arcana DC 22: Possessing a closer elemental connection than their kin, storm titan thunder tempests can transform into storm clouds. They're usually isolated from other titans, but sometimes lord over weaker creatures, presenting themselves as primal spirits to command tribes of humanoids. Other thunder tempests are content to drift in cloud form over the world or in the Elemental Chaos, striking out indiscriminately with lightning and thunder to create fear in those below.

Encounter Groups

Since they are less likely to group with other storm giants or titans, thunder tempests work with other sorts of elemental creatures, or they find followers in humanoid tribes.

Level 23 Encounter (XP 28,450)

- 2 fire archon blazesteels (level 19 soldier, *Monster Manual* page 19)
- 6 shardstorm vortex whirlwinds (level 23 minion skirmisher, *Monster Manual 2* page 101)
- 1 storm titan thunder tempest (level 21 solo lurker)

Storm Titan Thunder Tempest **Level 21 Solo Lurker**
Huge elemental humanoid (aquatic, giant) XP 16,000

Initiative +20 **Senses** Perception +21
HP 784; **Bloodied** 392; see also *blood storm*
AC 36; **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 35
Resist 20 lightning, 20 thunder
Saving Throws +5
Speed 8, fly 10 (hover), swim 8
Action Points 2

Bolt Whip (standard; must be in humanoid form; at-will) ✦ **Lightning, Thunder, Weapon**
Reach 4; +26 vs. AC; 3d6 + 8 lightning and thunder damage.

Hurl Thunderbolt (standard; at-will) ✦ **Lightning, Thunder**
Ranged 10; +24 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 8 lightning and thunder damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares and dazed (save ends).

Leaping Spark (standard; at-will)
The storm titan thunder tempest makes a basic attack, teleports half its speed, and makes a basic attack against a different target.

Booming Bellow (immediate reaction, when the storm titan thunder tempest is hit by an attack; at-will) ✦ **Thunder**
Close blast 5; +24 vs. Fortitude; 1d12 + 7 thunder damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Sheet of Lightning (standard; recharges when the storm titan thunder tempest uses *thunder tempest*) ✦ **Lightning, Polymorph, Thunder**
Area burst 2 within 20; +24 vs. Reflex; 2d12 + 7 lightning damage, the target is knocked prone, and the target takes ongoing 10 thunder damage and is deafened (save ends both). *Miss:* Half damage. *Effect:* The thunder tempest teleports to a square adjacent to or in the burst.

Lightning Flesh (when hit by a melee attack; at-will) ✦ **Lightning, Thunder**
Targets triggering attacker; +24 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 5 lightning damage, 1d10 + 5 thunder damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.

Thunder Tempest (move; ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Polymorph**
The storm titan thunder tempest takes the form of a Gargantuan thunder cloud, then flies its speed. While in this form, it is insubstantial and can occupy spaces occupied by other creatures. A creature that shares a square with the cloud loses lightning resistance (save ends). A creature that starts its turn in the thunder tempest's space is slid 3 squares. The storm titan thunder tempest resumes its titan form immediately after making an attack other than *lightning flesh*.

Blood Storm (free, when first bloodied; encounter)
Thunder tempest recharges and the storm titan uses it. The titan's attacks deal 10 extra thunder damage until the end of the encounter.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Giant, Primordial
Skills Diplomacy +23, Intimidate +23
Str 24 (+17) **Dex** 22 (+16) **Wis** 23 (+16)
Con 20 (+15) **Int** 15 (+12) **Cha** 27 (+18)

Storm Titan Spark Binder

These rank-and-file storm titans bind elemental stone and lightning to create their signature morningstars.

Storm Titan Spark Binder Tactics

A spark binder keeps as many enemies as possible within 3 squares of it (in range of *shattering morningstar* and the *storm fury* aura). It takes several powerful assaults for a spark binder to become afraid for its life. After becoming bloodied, a spark binder creates a shielding armor of stone to keep itself safe. A spark binder isn't as proud as other storm titans, and it retreats or parleys when it's close to defeat.

Storm Titan Spark Binder Lore

Arcana DC 26: Possessing innate potential with elemental magic, the storm titans called spark binders manipulate substance they draw from the Elemental Chaos. These troops carry morningstars

Storm Titan Spark Binder	Level 25 Elite Brute
Huge elemental humanoid (aquatic, giant)	XP 14,000

Initiative +18 **Senses** Perception +16

Storm Fury (Lightning, Thunder) aura 4; any creature that enters the aura or starts its turn there takes 10 lightning and thunder damage. Creatures other than storm giants and storm titans treat the aura's area as difficult terrain and cannot fly.

HP 576; **Bloodied** 288

AC 37; **Fortitude** 38, **Reflex** 35, **Will** 37

Resist 30 lightning, 30 thunder

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8, fly 10 (hover), swim 8

Action Points 1

Elemental Morningstar (standard; at-will) ✦ **Lightning, Weapon**

Reach 3; +28 vs. AC; 2d6 + 10 damage plus 2d6 lightning damage.

Hurl Thunderbolt (standard; at-will) ✦ **Lightning, Thunder**

Ranged 10; +28 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 9 lightning and thunder damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares and dazed (save ends).

Shattering Morningstar (standard; at-will) ✦ **Lightning, Thunder, Weapon**

The titan splits its morningstar into rocky fragments that hit nearby enemies, then forms the weapon again; close burst 3; targets enemies; +28 vs. AC; 2d6 + 9 damage plus 2d6 lightning and thunder damage.

Elemental Armor (minor; must be bloodied; encounter)

The storm titan spark binder surrounds itself with elemental stone tethered by arcs of lightning; the storm titan gains resist 15 to all damage. Each time the titan is hit by a melee attack, reduce the resistance by 5.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Giant, Primordial

Skills Diplomacy +25, Intimidate +25

Str 29 (+21)	**Dex** 22 (+18)	**Wis** 18 (+16)
Con 28 (+21)	**Int** 13 (+13)	**Cha** 26 (+20)

Equipment elemental morningstar

made from elemental stone chained together with arcs of lightning. These titans aren't quick to anger, and they can sometimes be reasoned with if encountered alone. However, they take their orders from titans more powerful than themselves and attack on sight if they have standing orders to do so.

Encounter Groups

Storm titans follow more powerful titans and act as sentries or bodyguards. They work best when grouped with controllers who can keep multiple targets within reach of the titans.

Level 25 Encounter (XP 35,000)

- ✦ 1 efreet pyresinger (level 25 controller, *Monster Manual* page 99)
- ✦ 2 storm titan spark binders (level 25 elite brute)

Storm Titan Archer

Storm titan archers bind the power of lightning and wind into their bows and arrows, firing great arrows that transform into thunderbolts.

Storm Titan Archer Tactics

A storm titan archer stays as far away as it can, firing arcing arrows from the sky. The archer can escape from melee by using *reactive bolt* or *swift zephyr*, or rely on its aura to keep foes from approaching. Since the titan can attack from such a long range, it might be tough for PCs to take the fight to it. Consider having the archer enter melee to protect its allies when they're bloodied, stunned, or otherwise in grave danger.

Storm Titan Archer Lore

Arcana DC 28: Storm titan archers carry bows and enormous arrows crafted for them by other creatures. Some of these titans even enslave dwarves or cyclopses and shackle them in workshops among their cloud castles, forcing them to make the highest-quality weaponry possible.

Storm Titan Archer	Level 28 Elite Artillery
Huge elemental humanoid (aquatic, giant)	XP 26,000

Initiative +24 **Senses** Perception +19

Storm Fury (Lightning, Thunder) aura 4; any creature that enters the aura or starts its turn there takes 10 lightning and thunder damage. Creatures other than storm giants and storm titans treat the aura's area as difficult terrain and cannot fly.

HP 394; **Bloodied** 197

AC 40; **Fortitude** 40, **Reflex** 42, **Will** 38

Resist 30 lightning, 30 thunder

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8, fly 10 (hover), swim 8

Action Points 1

Crackling Greatsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Lightning, Thunder, Weapon**

Reach 3; +33 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage plus 1d8 lightning and thunder damage.

Arcing Arrow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Lightning**

Ranged 20/40; +35 vs. AC; 3d6 + 10 lightning damage. *Effect:* The storm titan archer makes a secondary attack against a different creature within 10 squares of the primary target, originating the attack from the primary target: ranged 10; +33 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 10 lightning damage.

Reactive Bolt (immediate reaction, when hit by a melee or ranged attack; ⚄ ⚅)

The storm titan archer shifts half its speed, then makes an *arcing arrow* attack.

Swift Zephyr (standard; encounter)

The storm titan archer becomes invisible until the end of its next turn. The titan then shifts its speed, making two *arcing arrow* attacks at any point during the movement.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Giant, Primordial

Skills Diplomacy +25, Intimidate +25

Str 27 (+22)	**Dex** 30 (+24)	**Wis** 20 (+19)
Con 23 (+20)	**Int** 14 (+16)	**Cha** 22 (+20)

Equipment leather armor, longbow, 20 arrows, greatsword

Encounter Groups

Storm titan archers lead groups of melee combatants who keep foes busy on the ground while the archer fires from above. Some also work with demon lords or even gods.

Level 28 Encounter (XP 70,000)

- 1 primordial colossus (level 28 elite brute, *Monster Manual* 2 page 37)
- 2 storm gorgons (level 26 skirmisher, *Monster Manual* page 143)
- 1 storm titan archer (level 28 elite artillery)

Beholder Eternal Tyrant

After a powerful beholder (usually an ultimate tyrant) dies, its story might not end just yet. The most learned of these creatures can, through sheer force of will, retain their independence and power and create new bodies for themselves. These creatures are known as eternal tyrants, since they pursue immortality and rulership over as many creatures as they can.

Beholder Eternal Tyrant Tactics

The beholder has already transferred some of its power to its corporeal shell, mostly as protection against attack. Therefore, *eye rays* with a physical

Beholder Eternal Tyrant Shell **Level 31 Elite Brute**
Huge animate magical beast (construct) XP 46,000

Initiative +25 **Senses** Perception +28; all-around vision, darkvision
HP 720; **Bloodied** 360
AC 43; **Fortitude** 45, **Reflex** 43, **Will** 41
Immune disease, poison
Saving Throws +2
Speed fly 8 (hover)
Action Points 1

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
+34 vs. AC; 4d8 + 12 damage.

↯ **Jaws of the Beholder** (free, when an adjacent enemy is hit by any beholder's *eye ray*; at-will)
The beholder eternal tyrant shell makes a bite attack against the triggering enemy.

✈ **Eye Rays** (standard; at-will) ✦ see text
The beholder eternal tyrant shell uses one *eye ray* power chosen from the list below. Using *eye ray* does not provoke opportunity attacks.
1—Disintegrate Ray: Ranged 10; +32 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 8 damage, and the target takes ongoing 15 damage (save ends). *Aftereffect:* Ongoing 10 damage (save ends).
2—Telekinetic Slam Ray (Force): Ranged 10; +32 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 10 force damage, the beholder slides the target 10 squares, and the target is knocked prone.
3—Fire Ray (Fire): Ranged 10; +32 vs. Reflex; 4d8 + 14 fire damage.
4—Acid Ray (Acid): Ranged 10; +32 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 10 acid damage, and ongoing 15 acid damage (save ends).
5—Thunderbolt Ray (Lightning, Thunder): Ranged 10; +32 vs. Reflex; 4d6 + 10 lightning damage, and each creature within 2 squares of the target takes 10 thunder damage.

✧ **Central Eye** (minor 1/round; at-will) ✦ **Charm**
Close blast 5; +32 vs. Will; until the end of the beholder eternal tyrant shell's next turn, the target is marked and takes half damage when missed by an *eye ray* attack.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Str 38 (+29) **Dex** 30 (+25) **Wis** 26 (+23)
Con 40 (+30) **Int** 7 (+13) **Cha** 36 (+28)

Beholder Eternal Tyrant Essence — **Level 33 Elite Artilley**
Huge shadow magical beast (undead) — XP 62,000

Initiative +23 **Senses** Perception +31; all-around vision, darkvision
HP 327; **Bloodied** 163; see also *mental transference*
AC 45; **Fortitude** 43, **Reflex** 44, **Will** 46
Resist insubstantial
Saving Throws +2
Speed fly 8 (hover), phasing
Action Points 1

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
+40 vs. AC; 4d6 + 10 psychic damage.

Central Eye (minor; at-will)
Ranged 10; +38 vs. Fortitude; the target can't spend healing surges (save ends).

Eyes of the Beholder (free, when an enemy starts its turn within 5 squares of the beholder; at-will)
The beholder eternal tyrant essence uses a random *eye ray* attack against the triggering enemy.

Eye Rays (standard; at-will) ✦ see text
The beholder eternal tyrant essence uses one *eye ray* power chosen from the list below. Using *eye ray* does not provoke opportunity attacks.
1—Madness Ray (Charm, Psychic): Ranged 10; +38 vs. Will; 2d6 + 8 psychic damage, and the target must make a basic attack against its nearest ally as a free action.
2—Withering Ray (Necrotic): Ranged 10; +38 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).
3—Terror Ray (Fear, Psychic): Ranged 10; +38 vs. Will; 1d10 + 10 psychic damage. The target moves its speed away from the beholder eternal tyrant essence by the safest route, then is immobilized (save ends).
4—Nocturne Ray (Necrotic, Sleep): Ranged 10; +38 vs. Will; the target falls unconscious and takes ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends both).
5—Death Ray (Necrotic): Ranged 10; +38 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 10 necrotic damage, and if the target is bloodied, it is dazed (save ends). *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is dazed and weakened (save ends both). *Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target dies.

Mental Transference (when the beholder eternal tyrant essence drops to 0 hit points)
The beholder eternal tyrant essence is destroyed, and it transfers its mind into a beholder eternal tyrant shell within sight. The shell gains all the *eye ray* options of the essence (and keeps the eye rays it already had).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Str 18 (+20) **Dex** 25 (+23) **Wis** 31 (+26)
Con 30 (+26) **Int** 36 (+29) **Cha** 26 (+24)

effect come from the shell, and those with a mental effect (or necrotic effect) come from the essence. Unless it has a task to perform, the essence stays near the shell in case it needs to enter the body in an emergency.

Running an encounter with both halves of an eternal tyrant is not for the faint of heart, and such an encounter is probably one of the last encounters of your entire campaign. Plenty of save ends effects are used by the essence, so you might want to prepare cards with the conditions on them and hand them out to players whose characters you hit. Doing this can also keep you from using the same ray over and over, since it's easy to track which ones have been used in the recent past.

Beholder Eternal Tyrant Essence: This creature is wary of entering melee combat, since it will die if its ghostly form is destroyed. Rather than make sure it can use *eyes of the beholder* constantly, it stays far from the PCs and uses its *eye rays* and *central eye* on creatures it wants to see dead. If a creature moves adjacent to the essence, the essence uses *terror ray* to force the creature to retreat (and it might spend an action point to use the *terror ray* again if another creature is adjacent), then moves away. When the essence uses its phasing ability, it does so carefully; it doesn't want to leave sight of its shell, just in case it needs to use *mental transference*.

Beholder Eternal Tyrant Shell: This construct possesses a rudimentary intellect that is granted by the essence, which means that the shell isn't defenseless. With an essence or other master nearby, the shell takes orders. Otherwise, it fights on instinct. The shell wants to be in melee combat so that it can draw its enemies' fire. With its *central eye*, the shell designates targets for both itself and the essence. It can make up for its low brute accuracy with the central eye's power to make missed *eye rays* still deal half damage.

Beholder Eternal Tyrant Lore

Arcana or Religion DC 28: Mentally powerful beholder ultimate tyrants cling to their intellect tenaciously. In fact, some can sustain psychic shells of themselves after death. When an ultimate tyrant's soul reaches the Shadowfell, it can use the power of its mind to sever itself from the cycle of death. Such creatures are known as beholder eternal tyrants, and they create new construct bodies for themselves. Doing so can take centuries, and if a beholder could ever complete its body, it would be nearly indestructible.

Encounter Groups

Beholder eternal tyrants keep to themselves for the most part, but occasionally they group with aberrant monstrosities or other creatures that possess eternal life. You can make other, more diverse encounters if you have another powerful evil creature defeat a beholder eternal tyrant essence. The creature can assume control over the partially constructed body.
Level 29 Encounter (XP 88,000)

- ✦ 1 atropal (level 28 elite brute, *Monster Manual* page 11)
- ✦ 1 beholder eternal tyrant essence (level 33 elite artillery)

Level 32 Encounter (XP 138,000)

- ✦ 1 beholder eternal tyrant essence (level 33 elite artillery)
- ✦ 1 beholder eternal tyrant shell (level 31 elite brute)
- ✦ 1 tentacled torments (level 29 controller, *Forgotten Realms® Campaign Guide* page 245)

Level 32 Encounter (XP 141,000)

- ✦ 1 ancient red dragon (level 30 solo soldier, *Monster Manual* page 83)
- ✦ 1 beholder eternal tyrant shell (level 31 elite brute)

DEMON

Two different types of demons, the unbound balor and the havoc goristro, are described below.

Unbound Balor

When powerful demons cause misery and bloodshed, the forces of good work to kill or bind them. Across the world and the planes, countless powerful demons lie imprisoned within warding circles, in labyrinths, or inside extradimensional spaces within objects. Among these demons are a number of great balor generals. Trapped long ago, they seek to be set free to lead the forces of the Abyss once more.

Unbound Balor Tactics

An enemy might release an unbound balor to fight the PCs for it, or the PCs might free the balor by accident. An unbound balor feels no obligation to its liberators and attack anyone who's nearby. It uses *abyssal shackles* as often as it can, then attacks the creature it hit (and gains combat advantage from the restrained condition). It uses *wildfire whip* to place dangerous zones in any place the PCs would prefer to stand. *Wingclap* and *break away* let the balor reposition itself, but it tries to keep foes within reach of its aura and attacks.

Unbound Balor — **Level 21 Solo Brute**
Huge elemental humanoid (demon) — XP 16,000

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +22; truesight 6
Flaming Body (**Fire**) aura 2 (aura 3 while the balor is bloodied); any enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 5 fire damage (10 fire damage while the balor is bloodied).
HP 816; **Bloodied** 408; see also *bloodied wingclap* and *death burst*
AC 35; **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 33
Immune fear; **Resist** 20 fire, 15 variable (3/encounter)
Saving Throws +5
Speed 8, fly 12 (clumsy)
Action Points 2

Lightning Sword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Lightning, Weapon**
Reach 3; +24 vs. AC; 3d10 + 5 lightning damage (crit 4d10 + 5), plus 5 lightning damage while bloodied.

Flame Whip (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire, Weapon**
Reach 5; +22 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 damage, plus 5 fire damage while bloodied, the target takes ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends), and the target is pulled 4 squares to a space adjacent to the unbound balor.

Double Attack (standard; at-will)
The unbound balor makes a lightning sword attack and a *flame whip* attack (in either order).

Break Away (immediate reaction, when damaged by an attack from an enemy within 3 squares; at-will)
The balor makes a lightning sword attack against the triggering enemy, then flies half its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Abyssal Shackles (minor; ⚄ ⁞⁞) ✦ **Necrotic**
Ranged 10; +24 vs. Will; 1d6 + 8 necrotic damage, and the target is restrained (save ends). *Aftereffect:* The target takes 10 necrotic damage.

Death Burst (when reduced to 0 hit points) ✦ **Fire**
The unbound balor explodes in a burst of flame; close burst 10; +22 vs. Reflex; 5d10 fire damage. *Miss:* Half damage.

Wildfire Whip (standard; recharges when first bloodied) F **Fire, Zone**
Close blast 5; +22 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 7 fire damage. *Effect:* The blast becomes a zone of abyssal flames until the end of the encounter. Any creature that enters the zone or starts its turn there takes 10 fire damage.

Wingclap (move; recharges when first bloodied)
Close burst 3; no attack roll; the target is pushed 1d6 squares and knocked prone. If the unbound balor is bloodied, the target also takes ongoing 5 fire damage. *Effect:* The balor flies its speed.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Skills Bluff +16, Intimidate +16
Str 25 (+17) **Dex** 21 (+15) **Wis** 24 (+17)
Con 28 (+19) **Int** 13 (+11) **Cha** 13 (+11)
Equipment lightning sword, flame whip

Unbound Balor Lore

Arcana DC 27: Powerful demons can be easier to imprison than to kill. Throughout the course of history, the leaders of demon armies have been incarcerated by binding magic. If freed (intentionally or inadvertently), these creatures don't stop until they've returned to the upper echelons of the demonic hordes. Their combat skills atrophy during long imprisonment, but they retain their great strength and inherent abilities.

Encounter Groups

You can use an unbound balor as a "graduation" monster—one PCs fight while they're at the upper end of the paragon tier to usher them into epic play. When

unbound balors are encountered with other creatures, which is seldom, those creatures are frequently fellow demon prisoners released at the same time.

Level 22 Encounter (XP 24,300)

- 1 hezrou (level 22 brute, *Monster Manual* page 56)
- 1 nycademon (level 22 skirmisher, *Monster Manual 2* page 57)
- 1 unbound balor (level 21 solo brute)

Havoc Goristro

Devotees of the demon lords (especially minotaurs devoted to Baphomet) summon havoc goristros to sow bloodshed and destruction. Bloodthirsty bullies, these goristros revel in slaughtering weaker creatures.

Havoc Goristro Tactics

Though it has the ability to make ranged attacks in a pinch using *rent earth*, the havoc goristro rushes into melee as quickly as it can. It takes every opportunity to use *savage revenge*, moving back and forth across the battlefield. Keep the result of your 1d6 roll secret, so the PCs won't know whether they'll suffer more attacks when they hit the goristro. The goristro uses *havoc stomp* when it has several enemies in a cluster, so it can charge one and keep the rest close on its next turn as they spend time standing from prone. A havoc goristro doesn't care if it provokes opportunity attacks. (And honestly, it's a solo, so having it take more damage can help keep down encounter length.)

Havoc goristros work best when encountered amid interesting terrain. Frequently, they're sent to destroy settlements, so consider putting the goristro amid the streets of a town, and include innocent bystanders the PCs can rescue.

Havoc Goristro **Level 13 Solo Brute**
Huge elemental humanoid (demon) XP 4,000
Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +14; darkvision
Aura of Bloodlust (Charm) aura 20; while the havoc goristro is bloodied, a nonbloodied enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 10 damage if it didn't hit the havoc goristro that turn.
HP 528; **Bloodied** 264; see also *bloodied outburst*
AC 27; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24
Resist 15 variable (3/encounter)
Saving Throws +5
Speed 8
Action Points 2
⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
Reach 3; +18 vs. AC; 2d10 + 3 damage.
Rent Earth (standard; at-will)
The goristro rips a chunk from the ground and hurls it; ranged 10/20; +16 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.
Double Attack (standard; at-will)
The havoc goristro makes two basic attacks.
Blood Fury (standard; must be bloodied; at-will)
The havoc goristro makes 3 slam attacks. It can't target the same creature with more than two of these attacks.
Bloodied Outburst (free, when first bloodied; encounter)
The havoc goristro uses *blood fury*, then moves its speed.
Savage Revenge (immediate reaction, when damaged by an attack; at-will)
The havoc goristro makes a charge attack against the creature that damaged it.
Gouging Horns (standard; ⚄ ⚅)
Close blast 3; +16 vs. AC; 2d8 + 3 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends).
Havoc Stomp (standard; recharges when first bloodied)
Close burst 10; +16 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 6 damage, and the target is knocked prone. *Effect:* The havoc goristro makes a charge attack against one creature knocked prone by this power.
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal
Str 23 (+12) **Dex** 12 (+7) **Wis** 17 (+9)
Con 20 (+11) **Int** 6 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+6)

Havoc Goristro Lore

Arcana DC 23: Havoc goristros exult in violence, and love to be summoned to the mortal world, where they can kill punier creatures. Minotaur followers of Baphomet frequently summon them. Unlike normal goristros, these beasts are rarely used as underlings or servants, but instead are unleashed as forces of destruction. A cultist doesn't attempt to control a havoc goristro and will probably flee for its life after summoning such a beast.

Goristro Chattel **Level 25 Brute**
Huge elemental humanoid (demon) XP 7,000
Initiative +16 **Senses** Perception +24; darkvision
HP 287; **Bloodied** 143
AC 37; **Fortitude** 40, **Reflex** 34, **Will** 37
Resist 20 variable (1/encounter)
Speed 8
⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
Reach 3; +28 vs. AC; 3d10 + 8 damage.
Goring Charge (standard; at-will)
The goristro makes a charge attack: +28 vs. AC; 4d10 + 7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.
Protective Stomp (immediate interrupt, when an enemy moves adjacent to one of the goristro chattel's allies and is within 2 squares; recharges when first bloodied)
Close burst 2; +26 vs. Reflex; 4d10 + 9 damage, and the target is knocked prone.
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal
Str 30 (+22) **Dex** 18 (+16) **Wis** 24 (+19)
Con 27 (+20) **Int** 5 (+9) **Cha** 13 (+13)

Encounter Groups

It's exceedingly rare for a havoc goristro to appear with other creatures. When one does, its allies keep as far away as possible and attack enemies from a different flank.

Level 15 Encounter (XP 6,300)

- 1 havoc goristro (level 13 solo brute)

- 1 minotaur cabalist (level 13 controller, *Monster Manual* page 190)
- 3 minotaur warriors (level 10 soldier, *Monster Manual* page 190)

Goristro Chattel

Bred as servants (or even pets) for extremely powerful beings, goristro chattel work alongside their masters or guard secret areas of their masters' domains.

Goristro Chattel Tactics

A goristro chattel uses *protective stomp* when a creature moves to attack its master. It tries not to catch its master in the burst, but any other allies are just collateral damage. Once bloodied, the goristro chattel becomes less careful, and it doesn't always obey orders. If its master is defeated, the goristro chattel rampages without any regard for its own life or the lives of others.

Goristro Chattel Lore

Arcana DC 26: Some goristros are bred and trained as slaves for all sorts of powerful evil creatures. Though they can be unreliable on occasion, their sheer size and power make them desirable servants. Some claim that legions of these beasts live in great breeding pits within The Endless Maze (Baphomet's layer of the Abyss).

Encounter Groups

Goristro chattel serve as guards for all sorts of high-level monsters.

Level 25 Encounter (XP 35,100)

- 1 deva fallen star (level 26 artillery, *Monster Manual 2* page 62)
- 2 goristro chattel (level 25 brute)
- 1 marilith (level 24 elite skirmisher, *Monster Manual* page 57)

Level 26 Encounter (XP 49,500)

- 2 dragonborn champions (level 26 soldier, *Monster Manual* page 87)
- 3 goristro chattel (level 25 brute)
- 6 sons of winter (level 25 minion, *Draconomicon* page 243)

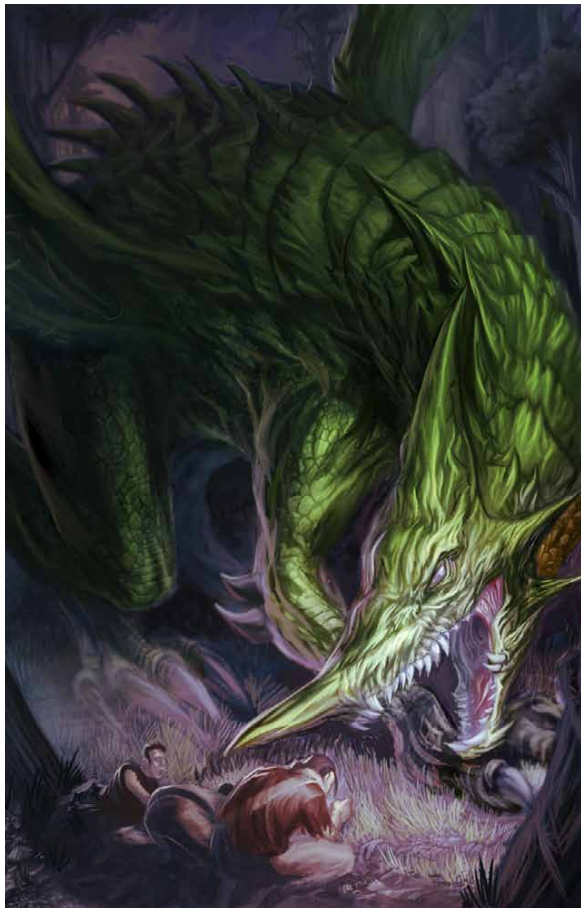
Green Dragon Arbiter

Arbiters are green dragons devoted to upholding laws, which they brutally execute. Green dragon arbiters manipulate their foes into exposing their lawbreaking, then spring into action once they find the evidence they need. Though most arbiters are evil, some of their number appears across all alignments.

Green Dragon Arbiter Tactics

The bread and butter of a green dragon's attacks are here: the bite, claws, *breath weapon*, and *frightful presence*. The other abilities have been replaced with ones that make the dragon a better leader. The dragon wants its allies to follow its example, so it drops into melee and stays there. It's not afraid to take some attacks to protect its allies, since it knows it has the hit points to do so. However, when it's near death, its green dragon nature might take over, causing it to make a quick retreat, regardless of its allies' fates.

The green dragon arbiter has ways to discourage enemies from hitting it (*invoke justice*) or from hitting



Green Dragon Arbiter **Level 23 Elite Controller (Leader)**
Huge natural magical beast (dragon) XP 10,200
Initiative +20 **Senses** Perception +19; darkvision
Equalizing Law (**Psychic**) aura 5; while the green dragon arbiter is bloodied, each nonbloodied creature that starts its turn within the aura takes 10 psychic damage.
HP 432; **Bloodied** 216; see also *bloodied breath*
AC 37; **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 36, **Will** 34
Resist 20 poison
Saving Throws +2
Speed 10, fly 14 (hover), overland flight 18
Action Points 1
⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
Reach 3; +28 vs. AC; 1d12 + 6 damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage and slowed (save ends both).
⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
Reach 3; +28 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the next time the target misses, the green dragon arbiter slides the target 3 squares.
⸸ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)
The green dragon arbiter makes two claw attacks.
↯ **Breath Weapon** (standard; ⚅) ✦ **Poison**
Close blast 5; +26 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 10 poison damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both). *Aftereffect:* The target is slowed (save ends).
↯ **Frightful Presence** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Fear**
Close burst 10; targets enemies; +26 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the green dragon arbiter's next turn. *Aftereffect:* The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).
↯ **Punishing Glare** (immediate interrupt, when an enemy within 10 squares hits one of the green dragon arbiter's allies; ⚄ ⚅ ⚅) ✦ **Charm, Gaze**
Close burst 10; targets the triggering creature; +30 vs. Will; the target is weakened (save ends).
Invoke Justice (free, when an ally within 20 squares misses with an attack roll; recharge when the green dragon arbiter is hit by an enemy's attack)
The ally rerolls the attack roll.
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff +23, Diplomacy +23, Insight +19, Intimidate +23
Str 20 (+16) **Dex** 28 (+20) **Wis** 17 (+14)
Con 24 (+18) **Int** 18 (+15) **Cha** 24 (+18)

its allies (*punishing glare*). Use these abilities, and the *equalizing law* aura, to make the PCs to spread out their attacks more than they normally would. Arbiters group with as many allies as they can to achieve the best use of *punishing glare*.

Green Dragon Arbiter Lore

Nature DC 17: With their innate instinct to manipulate and control other creatures, some green dragons become arbiters. These dragons track down and capture lawbreakers. They don't all serve one particular law. Some enforce devils' pacts, and others work in the employ of gods of law and of punishment, including Asmodeus, Erathis, and Torog.

Nature DC 26: A small number of green dragon arbiters serve the god of justice, Bahamut. For a chromatic dragon, proving its impartiality to the god of metallic dragons is extremely difficult, and only the word of Bahamut allow these arbiters to be accepted as his enforcers.

Encounter Groups

Green dragon arbiters work alongside other enforcers of law and balance (like maruts) or with other creatures employed by the same master.

Level 22 Encounter (XP 24,900)
- ✦ 1 green dragon arbiter (level 23 elite controller)
- ✦ 2 marut blademasters (level 21 soldier, *Monster Manual* page 185)
- ✦ 2 marut executioners (level 22 brute, *Monster Manual 2* page 162)

Level 24 Encounter (XP 32,500)
- ✦ 1 green dragon arbiter (level 23 elite controller)
- ✦ 2 storm devils (level 23 artillery, *Manual of the Planes* page 127)
- ✦ 2 assassin devils (level 24 lurker, *Monster Manual 2* page 64)

Legendary Remorhaz

Solitary remorhazes that inhabit frozen forests in the northern wastes can become legends among the people who live there. These long-lived beasts bear the scars of countless battles against inferior crea-

tures. Since they slaughter anyone they come across, they're known only in rumors or folk tales. People speak of these creatures in the same hushed, reverent tones they use when describing fearsome dragons. In fact, most ordinary people don't see the difference.

Legendary Remorhaz Tactics

A legendary remorhaz tries to keep one creature grabbed or swallowed at all times, and softens up its other targets with *thrashing claws*. It uses *trample* when it doesn't have a creature grabbed, and it might spend an action point to make a *thrashing claws* or bite attack right afterward.

Legendary remorhazes live near ice-encrusted water. You can set an encounter with one in an aquatic area, where the creature's superheated body causes pillars of steam to arise and obscure its true form.

Legendary Remorhaz — **Level 15 Solo Brute**
Huge elemental beast — XP 6,000

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +10; low-light vision
Blistering Heat (Fire) aura 2; each creature that starts its turn within the aura takes 10 fire damage.
HP 584; **Bloodied** 292; see also *bloodied claws*
AC 28; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 24
Saving Throws +5
Speed 6, burrow 4 (tunneling), swim 4
Action Points 2

Bite (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +20 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 damage, and the target is grabbed.

Swallow (minor; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
Reach 2; targets a creature grabbed by the legendary remorhaz; +18 vs. Fortitude; the target is swallowed and is no longer grabbed. While swallowed, the target is restrained and takes 10 damage plus 5 fire damage at the start of the legendary remorhaz's turn. The swallowed creature has line of sight and line of effect only to the legendary remorhaz, and no creature has line of sight or line of effect to the target. The swallowed creature can make only melee or close attacks. If the swallowed creature deals 20 damage to the legendary remorhaz with an attack, or if the legendary remorhaz dies, the legendary remorhaz uses *victim purge* (no action).

Trample (standard; at-will)
The legendary remorhaz moves its speed and can enter enemies' spaces. The legendary remorhaz makes an attack against each enemy whose space it enters; +18 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Bloodied Claws (free, when first bloodied; encounter)
The legendary remorhaz shifts 3 squares, then *thrashing claws* recharges, and the legendary remorhaz uses it.

Thrashing Claws (standard; ⚄ ⚅)
Close burst 1; target enemies; +20 vs. AC; 4d6 + 6 damage. *Effect:* If it isn't grabbing a creature, the legendary remorhaz makes a bite attack.

Victim Purge (minor; must be swallowing a creature; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
The legendary remorhaz regurgitates a swallowed creature; area burst 1 within 10; +16 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 9 fire damage. *Effect:* The regurgitated creature falls prone in the burst's origin square and is no longer swallowed.

Ice Skitter (move; at-will)
The legendary remorhaz moves its speed and pulls any grabbed creature with it. If the legendary remorhaz is bloodied, the movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.

Enraged Heat (immediate reaction, when a creature hits the legendary remorhaz with a melee attack; must be bloodied; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
The triggering creature takes 10 fire damage.

Legendary Tenaciousness
While the legendary remorhaz is bloodied, it can make a saving throw against one effect a save can end at the start of each of its turns.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 21 (+12) **Dex** 24 (+14) **Wis** 17 (+10)
Con 18 (+11) **Int** 5 (+4) **Cha** 9 (+6)

Legendary Remorhaz Lore

Arcana DC 18: Rumors and legends from the frozen north tell of an angry spirit—an enormous engine of destruction that rises up from the icy earth to destroy and devour. The people who live there say it has outlived generations of their people.

Arcana DC 23: The details about the beast resemble the traits of a remorhaz. These gigantic, wormlike creatures can burrow through the earth and have superheated bodies. A remorhaz can swallow a person whole.

Encounter Groups

A legendary remorhaz appears alone. You can use hazards and terrain to make the encounter more varied, rather than more monsters. Consider putting some tribal warrior minions on the PCs' side—expendable troops who vanish into the fog or under the ice, consumed by the mysterious beast. When a remorhaz does gang up with other creatures, they're bestial ice creatures.

Level 17 Encounter (XP 8,000)
- ✦ 1 legendary remorhaz (level 15 solo brute)
- ✦ 1 winterclaw owlbear
  (level 14 elite controller, *Monster Manual* page 212)

About the Author

Logan Bonner has a lair that is a series of spiraling tunnels, and at the nexus of these passages lurks Logan Bonner. Any creature passing over one of these tunnels is drawn towards it hypnotically, for the tunnels form a pattern which is hypnotic. When a victim is within the passages, he approaches Logan without realizing it and is charmed by a spell from the game designer unless a saving throw at -4 on the die is made. The charmed victim will then be devoured at Logan's leisure. In these depths, Logan has produced fiendish works such as *Adventurer's Vault*, *Forgotten Realms Player's Guide*, *Draconimicon*, and *Arcane Power*.

FORGOTTEN REALMS®

Explore Airspur

Brightest of the Fallen Stars

By Matthew Sernett
illustration by Adam Paquette, Empty Room Studio
cartography by Sean Macdonald

None who have seen it can think of Airspur without envisioning its heights. Its sun-baked streets wind switchback paths down the bright cliffs, its steep stairs cut nearly vertical ascents between buildings, and its suspension bridges arc between earthmotes high overhead. Titanic pillars of stone rise from the sea to the level of the land above, and gleaming elemental spires hang with crystalline clarity all throughout Airspur.

Those fortunate enough to have visited also remember Airspur as a city of colors and lights. The yellow cliffs tower above an astonishingly blue part of the Sea of Fallen Stars. Cobalt and golden roofs set off pale sandstone structures with gaily painted doors and shutters. Genasi of different hues—each tattooed with glowing lines—promenade in vivid fashions and glittering jewelry. Monolithic crystals, the elemental spires that drift in the air, refract the sun's light during the hot and lazy days and shed colored glows over vibrant nights of wine and dance.

It's no wonder many consider Airspur the most beautiful city in all Faerûn, nor do they question how it earned its moniker as the Brightest of the Fallen Stars.

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Airspur's Story

Airspur existed as a city-state on the border of Chessenta and Chondath, sometimes allying itself with the other city-states of Chessenta and at other times siding with Chondath. While not initially threatened during the Year of Blue Fire, Airspur saw massive destruction in 1386 DR as the Toril's sibling world of Abeir replaced much of the nearby landscape. A huge crevasse opened in the city and the sea moved. Those who did not die fled.

Meanwhile, Abeir brought with it most of the genasi nation of Shyr. Long dominated by a primordial named Karshimis, the genasi were free to determine their own destiny. They founded the city of Brassune among the blended ruins of the Chondathan city of Rath and Shyr. An initial period of collaboration between the largest families led to nearly two decades of infighting. The Covenant of Monarchy finally resolved this conflict by causing the noble families to elect a line of royal succession.

The first king of Akanûl was a savvy windsoul genasi named Zavon. His reign ended in the cataclysmic assault of Brassune by the Abolithic Sovereignty 50 years ago. This left his daughter, Queen Cyndra, with the duty of repelling the aboleth threat and reforming the shattered nation. This she did in the shelter of the ruins of ancient Airspur, displacing the orcs and half-orcs who had come down from the mountains to reclaim the place.

Queen Cyndra then led her people through a renaissance of sorts. She gained the trust and support of the noble families by creating the Covenant of Stewardship and establishing the Court of Majesty. According to the Covenant of Stewardship, the king's or queen's power could be checked by the unanimous vote of four stewards, who would be elected by the nobles every 10 years. These positions of stewardship in turn carry governmental and administrative responsibilities. Queen Cyndra gained popular support and propelled her state's economy by rapid adoption of new industries suitable to their new lands and the city's location.

Much-loved by her people, Queen Cyndra died of illness, leaving her only daughter to take up the scepter and mantle of rulership as Queen Arathane. Due to her youth and lack of political experience, the first decade of Queen Arathane's rule met with resistance from the stewards and other nobles. Yet in the last 10 years, Arathane has shown that she is an intelligent and magnetic leader, causing even her most determined opponents to give her respect. Airspur today is famed for its beauty, wealth, and the lifestyle of its genasi citizens.

Airspur

The vibrant capital of Akanûl, Airspur clings to the cliffs on the east side of a southern bay off the Sea of Fallen Stars

Population: 30,500; another 7,000 live in the nearby countryside. Most citizens are genasi descendants of refugees from Abeir, the majority being windsouls and stormsouls. Small populations of other races live in the city, particularly half-orcs who lived near the ruins of old Airspur before the genasi rebuilt it. Few dragonborn stay in the city for long due to tensions between Akanûl and Tymanther.

Government: Queen Arathane, a windsoul genasi, has ruled Airspur since the death of her long-lived mother. Four stewards control various aspects of the city, and together they can overrule the queen's edicts. Genasi occupy all important roles of power in Airspur. This is due to the political structure, traditions from Shyr in Abeir, and even outright prejudice (particularly against dragonborn who might be from Tymanther).

Defense: The Airspur defenses are divided between three corps: the Sky Guard, the Ground Defense League, and the Wave Riders. These professional soldiers form the core of its armies and the city watch during peacetime. The rest of Akanûl's military is conscripted from the population, although only a small number of nongenasi are included in the conscript catalogs.

Inns: Shadow of the Rock, Cliffwatch, Spireview Inn, Rang's Hostelry.

Taverns: Seven Stone Steps, The Hook and Eye, The Wind Clipper, The Drunken Gull.

Supplies: Thwaite's Tack and Gear, Gwind's Sundries, Seaside Provisioners.

Temples: None. The genasi of Airspur are uncertain about religion. The difference between gods and primordials or other powerful beings is not firmly established in their minds. Even so, religions of all kinds exist in the city. Priests of real gods and cults of false powers come to Airspur to gain converts, and some achieve results. As yet however, the steward of the Sea has blocked the construction of large temples that would take up land otherwise useful to the people or the state, and the Steward of Fire has the city watch occasionally check in on individuals of religious bent who might choose to follow a god's edicts instead of the city's laws.

Key Personalities and Groups

The beautiful capital of a young and robust nation, Airspur produces many influential individuals and organizations. Some of those important powers are presented here.

Queen Arathane

The common people of Akanûl consider Queen Arathane strong and fair. She is roundly praised for continuing her mother's policies of state support of descendants of the refugees of Shyr. Even the poorest among the genasi can expect shelter and food.

The nobility have a more complex relationship with their queen. Frequently opposed by the stewards early in her rule, she sometimes chafes under the Covenant of Stewardship and frequently seeks ways to achieve her ends without resorting to the Court of Majesty. The Firestorm Cabal represents one of these tactics.

These privateers are sworn to protect Akanûl, but the group is known to hold Arathane and the stewards in contempt. Arathane tacitly condones their presence and their occasional antics because of their usefulness as a supplement to the nation's defenses and as nongovernmental foil against other nations such as Tymanther. Arathane and a dashing deputy commander of the Firestorm Cabal even secretly pursue an on-again-off-again affair that would endanger both if it became known to the stewards or the leaders of the Cabal.

In addition to friction with the stewards, Queeen Arathane finds herself besieged by suitors and potential matchmakers. The queen is approaching her fourth decade of life, and the question of succession causes a great deal of gossip. Yet the iron-willed Arathane doesn't consider it to be a pressing issue since both her mother, Queen Cyndra, and her grandmother bore a child late in life.

Adventure Hook: Castan Thellis, a firesoul noble and member of the Firestorm Cabal, has started a rumor that Arathane cannot conceive an heir, and that a suitable replacement should be named immediately for the "good of the people." The player characters are drawn into this conspiracy when they witness a public rally (secretly orchestrated by Castan) calling for the queen to step down, which turns into an outright riot. After helping to quell the disturbance, the PCs are approached by an emissary of the queen, who asks their help in finding out who is behind the rumors. Success at the investigation might even lead the queen to ask the PCs to aid her in arranging a suitable match—a father to the future heir of Akanûl.

Tradrem Kethtrod, Steward of the Earth

The current Steward of the Earth is an earthsoul genasi, breaking the string of watersouls elected to the position. Until Tradrem, no earthsoul had aspired to a higher position than leadership in Akanûl's armies. Coming from a minor noble family, Tradrem feels he has much to prove, and the thoughts behind his earnest face constantly turn to the politics of any given situation.

Tradrem holds Stewardship of Earth, a position in charge of understanding the landscape—both literal and political—in which the genasi find themselves. He heads a group of informants and spies both within and outside Akanûl, and he commands the efforts of surveyors and explorers. Only the monarchs of Akanûl and former Stewards of the Earth have a true understanding of the size, means, and goals of the organizations that the Steward of the Earth controls. The power this provides is nominally checked by the fact that the Steward of the Sky can prosecute any illegal activities, but the queen can overrule any prosecution. Stopping that edict requires the Steward of the Earth and the other stewards to vote to prevent it. In the few decades since the inception of the Covenant of Stewardship, this system has yet to be tested due to loyalty among the noble houses, but as Tradrem seeks to use his powers to their full extent, he might find that he and the queen have reason to exchange favors.

Adventure Hook: Tradrem is ambitious, even if he does put the security of Akanûl first in his thoughts and actions, and he recently sent a pair of spies into neighboring Tymanther. They were captured, unfortunately, but they hold intelligence that Tradrem considers vital to Akanûl's security. In addition, the two windsoul spies carried a new magic item said to allow its bearer to listen to distant conversations and translate them into Common. Tradrem wants his spies and their eavesdropping devices back, and he is willing to reward the PCs well for their service.

Magnol, Steward of Fire

Magnol, a powerfully built male firesoul, acts as Steward of Fire. This makes Magnol the second-in-command of all military efforts, with the queen being their ultimate leader. Yet peacetime causes his role to look something more like police chief because the armies of Akanûl serve as Airspur's city watch.

Akanûl's army has only a small core of professional soldiers. Most serve as city watch during times of peace, but some make trips to outlying settlements and watchtowers. In times of strife, Queen Arathane calls upon her people to serve as its military. Conscripts have traditionally been drawn only from all able-bodied genasi, but in recent years, Queen Arathane has encouraged the formation of small corps of citizens of other races

The city watch is divided between three corps: the Sky Guard, the Ground Defense League, and the Wave Riders. The Sky Guard flies throughout the city on the backs of war drakes. For obvious reasons of safety, most of the Sky Guard are windsoul genasi. The Ground Defense League guards entryways into the city, the Catacombs, the Cliff Prison, the palaces of nobles, and on the streets. Genasi of all types serve in the Ground Defense League, but watersouls and earthsouls are the most populous. The Wave Riders, made up mostly of watersoul genasi, act as the harbor guard during peacetime.

Magnol must work in close concert with the other stewards in his capacity as leader of the armies and city watch. He relies upon the Steward of Earth for intelligence and detective work, the Steward of the Sky for legal authority and prosecution, and the Steward of the Sea for his budget and for dealing with violations of trade and taxation without resorting to arrests and jail time.

The division of power and need for cooperation keeps the stewards in conflict. As they jockey for influence in their overlapping spheres, they go to the queen for arbitration. This gives her power because she can decide matters not just upon the legality or justice but upon political favors the stewards owe her.

This kind of politicking sets Magnol to seething. He considers the preservation and growth of Akanûl the highest duty of all its citizens, and it frustrates him that control of the means to assure that is divided among the stewards and the queen. Magnol would prefer if he or someone he trusts could command it all, but he can't see a way to achieve that end that wouldn't weaken Akanûl or throw it into chaos.

Adventure Hook: City militia seized a ship trying to enter Airspur's harbor without proper authority or paperwork. According to rumor, shortly after examining the cargo hold, a militia captain commandeered a war drake to fly directly to Magnol's office. The steward then came to inspect the vessel, just as agents of Myxofin seized it from the militia for improperly filed tax documents. The Steward of the Sea held the ship for no more than an hour, however, before the Steward of the Sky's people claimed the right to seize the ship, asserting that it held a wanted fugitive from justice. Not to be outdone, the earth steward's office also made a claim on the ship, claiming national security was at stake. Now the ship sits in the middle of the harbor, guarded from shore by members of all four stewards, who squabble continuously over its disposition. Shortly thereafter, the queen seized the vessel and stationed her own people aboard. Enter the PCs, who are approached by Magnol to sneak aboard the vessel and acquire a particular cask located under heavy lock and key in the hold. Shortly before they depart, agents of other stewards approach the characters for the same purpose—to seize the mysterious chest. Of course, since they'll be dealing with members of the city militia, Magnol wants none of the guards on the ship hurt.

Lehaya, Steward of the Sky

As Steward of the Sky, this windsoul genasi acts as Lawgiver of Airspur and all Akanûl. Her appointed judges try the cases, and the lawyers that argue them owe their employment to Lehaya. Although this grants Lehaya great power, she has no direct control over who is brought to trial. That's the domain of Magnol and the city watch. Additionally, Queen Arathane's judgment is the highest law, and she can overrule the courts' rulings (although she too can be overridden by a unified vote by the stewards).

In practice, Lehaya exercises only light influence. She avoids using the courts to punish enemies and instead offers leniency to those who can give her advantage. Since these individuals are nearly always nobles, she balances her image among the people of Akanûl by frequently pardoning commoners brought before the court for minor offenses. Her famous mercy has earned her the nickname "Mother Law."

Lehaya avoids making waves in politics and society to help cover her extracurricular interest: the Virushead. The Virushead, a creature that unleashes a dozen deadly diseases with each breath, is hidden away in an earthmote and held in magical stasis to prevent the release of contagion. The genasi captured it in the wilds of Akanûl at great cost, bringing it in stasis and in secret to Airspur under the rule of Queen Cyndra. At that time, it was agreed that the Virushead might be used as a weapon but that it was too dangerous to

free from stasis until needed—an opinion with which the current Steward of Fire firmly agrees.

Lehaya sees the Virushead as a powerful weapon against the Abolithic Sovereignty—assuming her mages learn how to control and focus its power. She seeks to develop a disease that affects aboleths and other creatures but leaves genasi unscathed. Yet due in large part to Magnol's security objections, Queen Arathane outlawed experimentation with the Virushead. The other stewards would not vote to overrule her, so Lehaya has resorted to secret projects. Her trusted agents even clandestinely offer rewards for captured creatures they then use in Virushead research.

Adventure Hook: The Virushead has disappeared from its prison, and Lehaya, through an intermediary, approaches the PCs to discover its whereabouts before the plague carrier is turned against the city. To make matters more complex, Lehaya wants the creature returned alive and intact, and failure to do so could earn the PCs the steward's wrath.

Myxofin, Steward of the Sea

Long roads out of Akanûl are few, and none promise safe passage due to bandits and monsters. Almost all business in Akanûl comes through Airspur's port. Farmers in the surrounding countryside send olive oil, wine, fruit, grains, animals, and other goods to the city, and everything else comes to Airspur from the Sea of Fallen Stars.

Myxofin, a male watersoul genasi, oversees the business of the realm as the Steward of the Sea. His agents deal with issues of taxation, gaining building rights for businesses, shipping permits, docking and caravan fees, price fixing, and so on. If it has to do with money, the steward of the Sea is likely involved. This makes the position of Steward of the Sea coveted, and it takes significant investment of capital and promises to secure enough votes to gain the post. Fortunately, the roles of the other stewards as investigators, police, and prosecutors limits the corruption of that election to a level acceptable to the nobles and largely invisible to the common people.

Myxofin is as corrupt as the last three Stewards of the Sea combined, yet he's also smarter. He reaps profits through dummy business, the black market, and Airspur's guilds (both legal and illegal) while at the same time distancing himself as much as possible from their operations. Myxofin skims from the skimmers, and money rarely directly enters his hands.

Myxofin's plans have been so lucrative, in fact, that his success is starting to show. That's a liability that Myxofin can't afford. Also, Myxofin's term will soon end, and he eagerly anticipates enjoying his wealth—something that would be too conspicuous in Airspur. So of course, Myxofin has a plan. His agents have secretly engaged in negotiations with the ambassadors of the nations that currently have embassies within Airspur: Aglarond, Chessenta, High Imaskar, and Netheril. So far, the Shadovar have been the most receptive to his probes, and Myxofin is looking into acquiring a manse in Sakkors—under a pseudonym of course.

Adventure Hook: In his pursuit of property abroad, Myxofin has inadvertently given enemies of Akanûl access to the city. Now, Shadovar agents have struck twice at ships in Airspur's harbor, withdrawing before they can be caught. The attacks have shown an uncanny knowledge of the workings of harbor militia patrols, as well as the Steward of the Sea's own people. The PCs are tasked by the steward's office to find out who is behind the attacks and how they are always at the right place at the right time. Meanwhile, Myxofin, who knows perfectly well who is behind the attacks, sends rival adventurers to thwart the PCs while he tries to clean up the Shadovar corruption.

Firestorm Cabal

The Firestorm Cabal is an organization of privateers pledged by their leaders to protecting Akanûl. These scouts, mercenaries, and freebooters sporadically guard the nation from all manner of threats on sea, land, and in air. Commoners think of them as champions of the people, but some leaders in the city consider them troublesome rogues, particularly the Stewards of Sky and Fire. In truth, members of the Firestorm Cabal act as both, with many acting more like villains than heroes.

Despite their obvious disrespect for her authority, Queen Arathane ostensibly permits their operations in Akanûl due to their popularity with her people and their ability to supplement the nation's defenses. In truth she secretly employs them in all manner of missions that further her political goals or the good of the nation. For example, the Firestorm Cabal engages in border protection, an activity that takes the form of cross-border raids and robbery of caravans from foreign lands. Queen Arathane sees to it that the stewards look the other way when such attacks benefit her, particularly those that affect Calimshan and Tymanther. The Cabal knows not to impinge on trade too much or to allow a conflict to provoke war. It can count on some protection while within the borders of Akanûl, but beyond it most nations consider the Cabal's members as being outlaws.

The Firestorm Cabal has many safehouses and bases around Akanûl. Airspur, as the most populous area in the country, hosts its Motherhouse. The Motherhouse is the logistical center of the Cabal. Its leaders meet there when not in the field, and the Motherhouse serves as an initial training ground for new recruits.

The Motherhouse hides an increasingly important resource for the Firestorm Cabal. In a secret location behind the cliffs of Airspur, Firestorm Cabal sorcerers study wild magic. Yet their practices don't merely pull from the Elemental Chaos as is the case for normal sorcery. Instead these mages take power from the wild magic caused by the Spellplague. Indeed, the Firestorm Cabal makes many excursions with the clandestine intent of seeking out areas and creatures affected by the Spellplague and studying them. This is an outlawed activity punished by a death penalty, and so the Firestorm Cabal takes great pains to hide their successes (and their failures even more so).

Adventure Hook: In their quest for new sources of magical power, the Firestorm Cabal inadvertently opened a rift to the Abyss. Worse still, a powerful demon on the other side stepped through and prevented the sorcerers who opened the portal from closing it. Now, packs of ravaging demons have begun attacking settlements near Airspur, as well as militia patrols near the city. As more and more powerful demons have come through the portal, the threat grows, and the PCs must enter the well-guarded Motherhouse, make their way past still-hostile Firestorm Cabal members, defeat the demons in the depths of the house, and seal the portal.

Airsteppers Guild

The vertical nature of Airspur makes moving about the city something of a chore, but windsoul genasi can fly short distances and even float down from great heights without danger. The rapidity with which they can travel led to the formation of a league of couriers called the Airsteppers Guild. While each Airstepper is essentially a freelance messenger, they adhere to the codes of the Guild and wear its signature blue-and-white robes while working. Couriers use their windsoul powers to occasionally fly up levels, across gaps, or over obstacles, and they use them to descend distances safely. The competition to reach destinations swiftly, and the time it takes to renew their power of flight, created a culture of parkouring among the Airsteppers, which in turn has been adopted by the youth in the city. Now genasi of all types and even members of other races scale walls, leap between rooftops, or bound down the levels of the cliffs.

The stewards and the queen employ trusted Airsteppers, frequently hiring multiple Airsteppers to work together as guards or decoys to important messages. The Steward of Earth and the Steward of the Sea both have a great deal of interest in the information traffic of the city, but each has only a few corrupt Airsteppers in his employ. Most Airsteppers follow the Guild's rules assiduously—rules that include not examining the package or message carried.

Elemental Spires

Gleaming crystal spindles hang in the sky above the city and dip down into the cleft in the cliffs that Airspur occupies. These gemlike monoliths, known as elemental spires, came from Abeir when the worlds combined. Now they glitter in the sky all over Akanul, but a surprising number have collected over Airspur. Like earthmotes, they unfailingly float in the sky, but unlike earthmotes, they drift in small orbits, each moving around its own arbitrary point in space. During the day they dazzle the eye by refracting and reflecting sunlight, but as the light dims they glow of their own accord.

The elemental spires range in size from a dozen feet tall to nearly a hundred feet tall. There are three colors: yellow, orange, and blue. Each color corresponds to a specific energy, and the energy is the reason no one builds on an elemental spire. When a creature or object comes within a certain distance of a spire, it lashes out with the energy associated with its color: fire for orange, cold for blue, and lightning for yellow. The larger the spire, the greater the distance that it lashes out. The residents of Akanul are well aware of the spires' danger and know to give them a wide berth.

Instead of using specific mechanics for all levels of play, you can modify the danger of the spires based on the PCs' level so that the spires remain a threat in whatever adventure you're running. When running an encounter near an elemental spire, decide the distance at which a spire strikes, and roll initiative for the spire. All creatures within the range at the start of the spire's turn are attacked. Roll an attack against Reflex with a bonus to the attack roll equal to the PC's level + 5. Consult the Damage By Level chart on page 185 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*® and use the medium damage expression for the PC's level.

Locations

Buildings in Airspur stand in the coves at the base of the cliffs, climb the nearly sheer face of the rock along long inclined roads, stand tall atop earthmotes and pillars of stone, dot the cliffs' edges, and even burrow into the sides of the cleft in which the city resides. Genasi buildings utilize the ruins of Ancient Airspur and accentuate the natural environment in inventive ways, layering the genasis' Abeirian fancies onto the staid columns of old while at the same time highlighting the beauty of the area. What follows are some of the important areas that exist in this lovely setting.

1. Court of Majesty

The Court of Majesty is the royal court for Queen Arathane and her stewards. It convenes around the top of a small earthmote, with each of the five thronemotes floating just above it and around its edges. Those coming to court climb up from a central stair carved in the earthmote and accessed from below by a bridge from a lower earthmote upon which stands the Queen's Palace. The Court of Majesty is left open to the air, but in heat or inclement weather, poles and cloth shades are raised. Queen Cyndra set up this court to put the rule of Akanûl in plain view of the people (particularly the nobles). Queen Arathane would prefer to do without the formality, but the stewards oppose breaking with tradition because the open-air court puts their influence on full display.

2. Street of Cerulean Hues

This long highway snakes along the top of a cliff south of the city that overlooks the Sea of Fallen Stars. It's famed for its breathtaking view and the breakneck fall to the rocky shore an unwary person can experience. The wide cobbled street owes its existence to old Airspur and the empire of Chessenta rather than the travel needs of Airspur's current residents. Although used by some farmers and merchants, the street is dominated by inns and the pleasant villas of the wealthy looking to have a little more room and a fine view. The Steward of the Sea keeps a palatial second home along the road where he entertains and hosts important guests to the city.

3. Darkled Depths

Shadowed by cliffs and a low-hanging earthmote, the dripping neighborhood known as the Darkled Depths gets little direct sunlight and acts as the industrial hub of the city. The earthmote above it wells with water that flows over its sides, and a clifftop stream falls down toward the bay. The genasi harness the

force of both of these sources of water to fill aqueducts and power mills. Due to the noise, shadows, and dampness, the Darkled Depths serves as home to some of Airspur's poorest citizens. Many nongenasi live in and around this area due to subtle pressures of prejudice and suspicion.

Adventure Hook: A recent spate of burglaries targeting some of the city's wealthiest nobles have been tracked to the Darkled Depths. Captains in the city militia are hesitant to send their own troops into the city, so the PCs are hired to find out who has been terrorizing the city elite and put a stop to the robberies. Strangely, the poor residents of the Depths seem unwilling to cooperate. Is this thief a Robin Hood of sorts? Someone with a grudge against the nobility? Or someone with a darker agenda in need of funding?

4. Plaza of Leaping Fountains

Located on an earthmote that serves one of the two causeways between the cliff sides, the Plaza of Leaping Fountains hovers several hundred feet above the bay in the most vibrant entertainment district in the city. The open square hosts many fountains that spout water over the walkways, arcing above the heads of revelers and filling the air with cooling mist. Named for the engineering of its fountains, the Plaza is famous for the shops, taverns, inns, and cafes that line it and the nearby streets. If something of note happens in the city, it frequently happens at the Plaza.

5. Catacombs

The collapse of ancient Airspur exposed buried caves and tunnels beneath the city, leaving them open to the air on the sides of the cliffs surrounding the bay. The genasi have repurposed nearly all these structures as they've built buildings along the cliffs. However, they left one series of caverns true to its purpose. These sprawling catacombs housed the Chessentan dead for centuries. Now they hold genasi bones.

The Catacombs remain lightly guarded at all times. Any Airspur citizen can enter them to honor the fallen, but others are discouraged. They have few visitors in any event.

The Catacombs' farthest reaches continue to be the domain of Chessenta's ancient dead. These tunnels were considered old when Airspur was under human rule. Genasi studiously avoid them, which makes the distant tunnels a perfect meeting place for criminals and dissidents to genasi rule—assuming the guards can be distracted or bought off.

The half-orcs and orcs Queen Cyndra displaced were not mere squatters; they were in fact the true heirs to Airspur. Before the Spellplague, almost a third of the Airspur's population consisted of half-orcs, and like the other citizens, they fled when destruction came. Unlike many of the other citizens, they had a place of relative safety to turn to: the Akanapeaks. In those mountains the half-orcs allied themselves with orc tribes, and they eventually returned to the city to see what remained. Those not killed in Queen Cyndra's purge and the attack by the Abolithic Sovereignty have now returned by way of distant caves that link to the catacombs. Many now live peacefully in the city, but others still bear a grudge.

The half-orc dissidents command too few to take the city by force, and their full-blooded orc allies can't enter the city. Thus, the half-orc's leaders are attempting to make subtle inquiries into how they might profit from their situation. Of course, they can sell goods gained from the buried dead, but assaults by undead have made them wary of too much grave robbery. Ideally, the half-orcs hope to connect with someone willing to take power in the city, selling themselves and their orcs as mercenaries and then using the chaos of battle to revenge themselves on those who wronged their elders.

Adventure Hook: A half-orc necromancer who calls himself Deadtusk has emerged from the Akanapeaks through the Catacombs, leading a small army of the undead. The half-orc has swayed a number of orc and half-orc dissidents to his cause, and he plans to lead his force into Airspur, slaughtering its citizens to bolster his own forces, and ostensibly retaking the city in the name of the displaced orcs. What his half-orc followers do not know is that he secretly seeks to create a new necropolis on the bones of dead Airspur, and his plans do not include a place for the living of any sort.

6. Drakeyards

These stockyards and markets exist solely for the purpose of breeding, rearing, training, and selling drakes. The genasi brought a tradition of drake breeding with them from Abeir, and several unique species exist only in Akanûl (for now). Although hobbyists and boutique breeders do a small business in other areas of the city, the Drakeyards handle the bulk of the trade.

7. Motherhouse

The Firestorm Cabal Motherhouse consists of a structure built against the cliff and well-guarded tunnels beyond. Only the most trusted individuals enter the tunnels behind the Motherhouse.

8. Akanûl Courthouses and Virushead

This earthmote hides the Virushead deep below the Akanûl Courthouses. No one is supposed to tinker with the Virushead, so when the Steward of the Sky wants to bring in subjects for testing, she is forced to use cloak-and-dagger tactics—particularly for large monstrous creatures.

9. Cliff Prison

The Cliff Prison consists of old Chessentan dungeons in the cliffs near the Courthouses' earthmote. The genasi of Airspur despise the concept of slavery, and they seek to avoid the appearance of it by keeping the number of prisoners low and hiding those they have. Many terrible crimes are punished by death and many more are punished by banishment (with death being the sentence for return). Most individuals held in the Cliff Prison are awaiting their walk across the Bridge of Justice to their trials. Others have committed crimes small enough that a stay in prison and a fine were deemed sufficient future deterrence.

10. Akanawater Falls

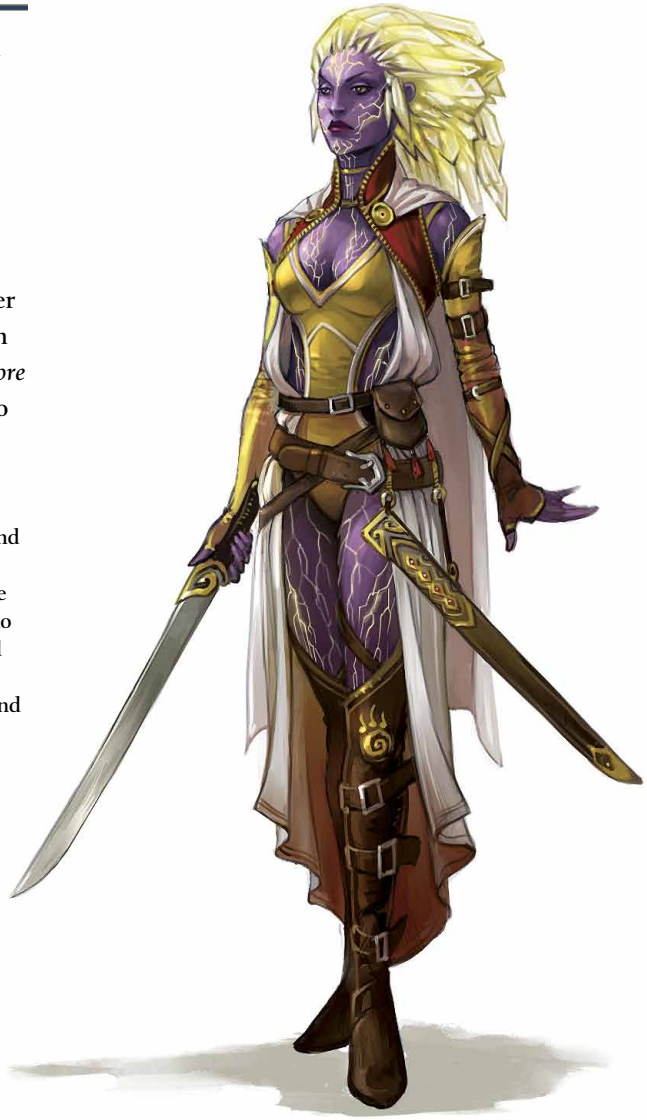
The Akanawater flows from the Akanapeaks and falls down in several splashing levels to the bay. In an already beautiful city, the falls present yet another stunning vista.

More About Airspur

If you'd like to know more about Airspur, check out *Dragon* #378 when it comes out. This article is the first in a short series about the city, and you'll find the next installment in the August issue. Yet there's no reason to wait if you want to start in on adventures right away. You can get started with your own adventures immediately, or you can play the RPGA adventure "The Depths of Airspur," first of a number of adventures by RPGA members that takes place in the city. You might also want to read *The Restless Shore* by James P. Davis. It features a genasi character who grew up in Airspur.

About the Author

Matthew Sernett has been a pizza cook, an onion packer, and an assembly line worker in a spring factory—grueling work that was surprisingly good endurance training for being the editor-in-chief of *Dragon*® *Magazine*. After ceding that role to others with greater fortitude (keep it up, Chris!), he worked as D&D designer and helped to create 4th edition. He now happily splits his professional time between D&D design and world-building for Magic: The Gathering®.



RANGER

Martial training from the legendary Masters of the Verdant Silence

BY BRUCE R. CORDELL

illustration by Mclean Kendree

Decisive and quick, rangers are dangerous warriors whose ability to dispatch foes is legendary. Some rangers who specialize in two-weapon fighting find ways to enhance their martial prowess by seeking instruction from secret masters of swordplay. In the deepest forest cores—untouched by hammer, axe, or saw—wondrous and terrible things abide. There one might find a hidden lodge where Masters of the Verdant Silence train their students.

The Verdant Silence is a furtive martial order that safeguards forests and Feywild crossings from corruption. The order, the innermost membership of which has never been disclosed, seems generally benign, though a few stories suggest otherwise. Most people believe that the order sets itself against anything that tries to disrupt a forest's heart, especially those disruptions that threaten to spill into the Feywild. The order also expends great effort in opposing forces that are in any way tainted by the Far Realm.

The Verdant Silence differs from other martial orders in several ways, not the least being its highly secretive nature. Additionally, instead of training initiates in the way of the open hand, as some monastic communities do, the Verdant Silence focuses on weapons, especially two-weapon fighting. The Masters of the Verdant Silence teach their students to incorporate into their martial methods both the subtlety and the violence inherent in nature. Few foes stand long before techniques such as the *bending branch*, the *lashing leaves*, and the *storm in the trees*.

Word concerning the existence of the Masters of the Verdant Silence has spread. Those rangers who prove themselves worthy of training under the masters can learn martial techniques that are sure to dazzle and dismay foes in equal measure. A flurry of swirling swords confuses foes armed with forged weapons as much as it does creatures armed with claws, teeth, or tentacles.

Rangers who wish to learn more of the Verdant Silence are advised to journey to a forest's heart, walk quietly and calmly into its green embrace, and then await the masters.

Level 1 Encounter Exploit

Plant to the Hilt — **Ranger Attack 1**

You embed both of your weapons in your foe and use them as grips to swing that foe around to a new position.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC. Make the attack twice, once with your main weapon and once with your off-hand weapon.
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you slide the target 1 square to a square adjacent to you. If both attacks hit, the second slide increases to 3 squares.

Level 2 Utility Exploit

Bending Branch — **Ranger Utility 2**

You resist a foe's attempt to move you, and like a great tree swaying in a storm, you snap back, ready to attack.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Immediate Interrupt **Personal**
Trigger: You are pulled, pushed, or slid
Effect: You negate the forced movement. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus to your next melee attack roll before the end of your next turn.

Level 3 Encounter Exploit

Confusion of Blades — **Ranger Attack 3**

Your twin blades become a whirl of slapping, jabbing, and cutting surfaces.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC. Make the attack twice, once with your main weapon and once with your off-hand weapon.
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage. The attack deals 1 extra damage for each enemy adjacent to you.

Level 6 Utility Exploit

Death Threat — **Ranger Utility 6**

You bring down your quarry and then fix your hunter eyes on another foe.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: You reduce your quarry to 0 hit points
Effect: Choose one enemy within 5 squares of you. You designate that enemy as your quarry, and you gain combat advantage against it until the end of your next turn.

Level 7 Encounter Exploit

Lashing Leaves — **Ranger Attack 7**

Your dancing blades cut your foe deep, leaving wounds that are exacerbated by further attacks.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC. Make the attack twice, once with your main weapon and once with your off-hand weapon.
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage. Until the end of your next turn, the target takes 2 extra damage whenever it is hit. If both attacks hit, the extra damage equals 1 + your Wisdom modifier.

Level 10 Utility Exploit

Blood of the Fallen — **Ranger Utility 10**

Your triumph is like a balm to you.

Daily ✦ Healing, Martial
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: You reduce your quarry to 0 hit points
Effect: You regain hit points equal to your healing surge value + your Strength modifier.

Level 13 Encounter Exploit

Storm in the Trees — **Ranger Attack 13**

You move like a tempest among the pines, slashing at one foe and then leaping at another.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC. Make the attack twice, once with your main weapon and once with your off-hand weapon.
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage. If both attacks hit, you can shift 2 squares and make a melee basic attack against a different creature.

Level 16 Utility Exploit

Mirror of Steel — **Ranger Utility 16**

With your glittering play of blades, you deflect attacks.

Daily ✦ Martial, Stance
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the stance ends, you gain a +1 bonus to all defenses against melee attacks and ranged attacks while you are wielding two melee weapons.

Level 17 Encounter Exploit

Canopy of Blades — **Ranger Attack 17**

You whirl your blades ferociously, cutting your foe and warding off attacks.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC. Make the attack twice, once with your main weapon and once with your off-hand weapon.
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage.
Effect: You gain a +2 power bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn. The bonus increases to 4 if either attack hit and to 6 if both hit.

Level 22 Utility Exploit

Verdant Silence **Ranger Utility 22**

You call on the peace and calm that lives at the heart of the forest, where the Masters of the Verdant Silence meditate.

Daily ✦ Martial
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You spend a healing surge but regain no hit points. You instead end each effect on you that a save can end.

Level 23 Encounter Exploit

Crashing Blades **Ranger Attack 23**

You bring both of your weapons crashing down on your foe's head so hard that it has difficulty focusing for a moment.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Strength vs. AC (main weapon)
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage.
Effect: Make a secondary attack against the target.
Secondary Attack: Strength vs. AC (off-hand weapon)
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage. If the primary attack also hit, the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Level 27 Encounter Exploit

Seeking Roots **Ranger Attack 27**

One of your blades finds your foe, then your other one does so. You cap the attacks by scissoring the foe with both weapons.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Strength vs. AC (main weapon)
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage.
Effect: Make a secondary attack against the target.
Secondary Attack: Strength vs. AC (off-hand weapon)
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage. If the primary attack also hit, the target takes 5 + your Strength modifier extra damage.

Magic Item

This magic weapon is useful for any ranger who wields two melee weapons.

Verdant Silence Weapon **Level 7+**

This deadly blade appears as a sharp stylized leaf, set on a hilt of burnished wood.

Lvl 7	+2	2,600 gp	Lvl 22	+5	325,000 gp
Lvl 12	+3	13,000 gp	Lvl 27	+6	1,625,000 gp
Lvl 17	+4	65,000 gp			

Weapon: Heavy blade
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Property: When you are wielding this weapon and hit an enemy twice with a ranger power that requires two melee weapons, you can shift 1 square as a free action.
Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You are wielding this weapon and hit a target twice with a ranger power that requires two melee weapons. *Effect:* The target grants combat advantage (save ends).

About the Author

Bruce R. Cordell is an Origins and ENnie award-winning game designer whose long list of professional credits includes the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*™, *Keep on the Shadowfell*™, *Draconomicon*™*: Chromatic Dragons* and *Open Grave: Secrets of the Undead*™. Bruce is also an author of Forgotten Realms novels, including *Plague of Spells*, the first book in the Abolethic Sovereignty series.

Psionics

BY MIKE MEARLS AND STEPHEN SCHUBERT

illustration by Christine MacTernan - Empty Room Studios and Kieran Yanner

With the debut of the psion this month, the psionic power source has now officially become part of 4th Edition Dungeons & Dragons.

No, we're not forgetting the monk, but since that class has only appeared in playtest form so far, we're calling the psion the first official psionic class for the new edition.

Also with the psion's debut comes the new power-point mechanic associated with three of the psionic classes slated for *Player's Handbook* 3, so this seems a good time to talk about the process of design and development that led to the psionic power source.

This article features commentary from D&D Lead Designer Mike Mearls (who led the design of *Player's Handbook* 3) and D&D Lead Developer Stephen Schubert (who led the development team assigned to the book).

Mike: Psionics have been a part of D&D since the ancient days of the *Eldritch Wizardry* supplement to the original Dungeons & Dragons game. They also appeared in an infamous appendix in the 1st Edition *Player's Handbook*, allowing any character to get lucky by randomly manifesting psionic powers.

Stephen: My first experiences with psionics was back in a 2nd Edition game in college, where one of my fellow players would always roll for a wild talent for each of his characters.

I thoroughly enjoyed the 3rd Edition psionics system. The versatility of the psionic classes provided the most appeal for me. I liked having a bevy of tools at my disposal, with the means to augment them to be just as powerful as I needed.

Mike: But despite its long history in the game, the psionic power source has always existed at the fringe due to real or perceived flaws.

Many gamers wince at psi's science fiction trappings. Others see it as stepping on the wizard's toes, an additional magic system in a game already well-served by its core rules.

Stephen: Even when my psion's mind-affecting powers couldn't hurt the undead templars we faced in Dave Noonan's Dark Sun campaign, I simply looked at it as a challenge, and eventually found living minds to blast. (Thankfully, that's not a problem for the 4E psion.)

The weak points of the system began to show at higher levels, where the psion could blast the equivalent of a wizard's 9th-level spell every round he needed to. Used with restraint, it worked well in play.

Why Psionics?

Stephen: When concepting for PH3 began, we decided it would be appropriate to turn up the complexity dial a notch. By the time the book released in 2010, many players would have nearly two years of

experience with the new edition under their belt, and plenty of folks would be looking for a new challenge.

Mike: For *Player's Handbook* 3, we wanted to give something new to folks who might feel they've seen everything 4th Edition had to offer.

From this decision came one of the key design themes for the book: *flexible options*. We knew that psionics would be a good fit for this theme.

You can expect that, going forward, future *Player's Handbook*s will broaden the game in similar ways. It's nice to have an accessible system for the first core rulebook, because that lets anyone play a fighter or wizard without worrying about mastering a more elaborate rules set. As we move forward, though, we can push the complexity and diversity of options.

Designing Psionics

Mike: We really wanted to do something with psionics that was different from the power sources introduced so far. One of the common complaints I've heard about Dungeons & Dragons is that the classes are too similar. I think that concern is more academic than actual—in play, the similar power structure of the classes is generally obscured by the other options available—but there's still a grain of truth to the perception.

When we sat down to look at how to add psionics to D&D, two key issues stood out:

• Don't just add psionics to the game, add them to the world of D&D. Too often, psionics have been treated as a game mechanic without a story. We wanted to avoid that mistake that in 4th Edition.

• Focus on why people like psionics. From a 3e perspective, that pretty clearly rested on the system of power points (and the versatility they provided).

The Psionic Story

Mike: In the history of Dungeons & Dragons, the story of psionics too often has taken second place to its mechanics. Many readers and authors feel that psionics doesn't integrate seamlessly with the core concepts of a fantasy world.

Rather than treat that as a bug, we looked to it as a feature. The psionic power source—or at least its expression as used by psions and other classes with power points—is something new to the world of D&D. Monks have used psionic power for ages, but they tapped into it when it was relatively weak.

Recently, as the Far Realm's incursion into the world has grown more aggressive, psionic energy has become more common, stronger, and easier to control. Previously, only monks could tap into it with their rigorous discipline and self-control. Now others can utilize it, from psions who study and unlock its secrets to others who acquire psionic powers seemingly at the universe's whim.

As psionic power matured and strengthened, competing philosophies arose regarding its use and purpose. The teachings of early psionicists focused on the correct methods of its use along with the role psionics should play in the world. Some philosophies preach that psionics are a boon meant to be used for the good of all, while others place psionic users at the top of an unforgiving pecking order. From the wise old master who takes in young students to the power mad conqueror who seeks to build a

society where psionicists rule over their lesser peers, these philosophies shape how psionics affect the world.

Power Points

Mike: Readers familiar with the 3E version of power points might see this mechanic as a radical direction for D&D. In reality, power points are simply a new method of representing a subset of the standard array of powers present in the game. The psion and the wizard will deliver a similar amount of punch in a given round, encounter, or day—but the number of options available to the psionic character represents a significant shift in how you play that character.

Stephen: In this new system, power points become the character's primary encounter-based resource, taking the place of his or her encounter attack powers.

Mike: At one point in design, power points fueled both daily and encounter powers. That direction proved untenable, as it led to players "sacrificing" their encounter powers to use a single daily power many times, and vice versa.

By limiting power points to encounter powers, we had a much clearer idea of what a power point actually represented. We knew it was some shard of an encounter power and could design and balance them as appropriate.

Stephen: When determining the number of power points a character should have have, we created a simple equation in which two power points approximately equaled one "[W]" in power. Of course, the equation isn't limited simply to damage output, as we've already established our general guidelines for how much damage a power could do when the various conditions such as dazed or blinded are applied with them.

Once we defined the exchange rate for the power point currency, we could determine how many power points a character needed at any given level to keep up with other characters. Since augmentable powers were replacing encounter powers, we started with a rough and direct translation—you'd have 2 power points for each heroic tier power, 4 for paragon powers, and 6 for each augmentable epic power. As we playtested the augmentable powers, this progression migrated to where it is now—very close to 2 power points each time a standard character would gain an encounter attack power.

Versatility

Stephen: As you can see, characters using power points already enjoy great versatility in their round-by-round options. But simply choosing when to turn an at-will power into an encounter power isn't the full extent of the power point system.

Every augmentable at-will power includes not one but two different augmentation options available whenever your character uses the power. In addition to the full-bore "this is now as good as an encounter power" augmentation offered, each power also includes a cheaper augmentation that provides a benefit applicable in certain situations. This benefit won't necessarily be useful every round—or indeed, even every encounter—but the minor augmentations offer your character the unique ability to take advantage of current circumstances in a way that others can't.

Generally, we expect powers to be fully augmented most of the time (when augmented at all). That said, we think you'll find an interesting decision between using less expensive augments more times during the fight versus using augments that cost more points but have a bigger bang or a better effect. This choice doesn't just support the "options" theme of *Player's Handbook 3*—which you'll see reflected in other sections of the book as well—it reflects the entire theory behind tactical decision-making in 4th Edition Dungeons & Dragons.

Odds and Ends

Stephen: Creating a new power point system wasn't the end of our challenges. We next had to make it fit within the context of the existing 4th Edition game rules. This meant looking for unintended consequences elsewhere in the game.

For example, when a class has at-will attack powers that can be augmented to have the output of an encounter power, it dramatically improves any effect that improves or keys off at-will attacks—an unintended consequence of the power point system.

To solve that problem, we added the Augmentable keyword to all powers allowing power-point augmentation, which states (among other things) that such powers only count as "at-will attacks" when not augmented.

We also created specialized rules to replace the Novice Power multiclass feat and Paragon Multiclassing system to handle interactions with swapping encounter and at-will attack powers for multiclass characters.

Mike: One advantage to an exceptions-based approach to the stuff that glues disparate system elements together, such as multiclassing, is that it allows us to build the right tool for the job.

Complexity in Play

Stephen: The power point subsystem is one of the most complex rules systems we've layered onto 4th Edition's class system. In any given round, a character can choose between three different at-will attacks and two levels of augments for each of those powers (plus the usual complement of daily or utility powers). That's a lot of options!

That said, during development I observed that these classes might end up being the easiest to play, once you figure out which power to use in an encounter. There's something pretty straightforward, even reassuring about choosing one power and relying on it repeatedly to get the job done.

It's a big challenge for power design and development, since we don't want to make an easy "go-to" button that is mashed repeatedly in every encounter in preference to the rest of your powers, but through playtesting we think we've found a good balance point.

Mike: The key to hitting the right level of complexity was in making sure each 1-point augment is interesting and fun. That pushes you to a design where a small number of points is interesting and dodges the issue of managing more than a couple dozen of the things.

On top of that, the system scales nicely. As you gain more points, your powers become more expensive. You can micromanage if you want, but most players will burn off their powers in big chunks. You might have a pile of 20 or so points, but that really represents three or four decisions, not 20 separate options.

The Future of Psionics

Mike: As with all of our power sources, expect to see plenty of support for psionics in future releases. Psionic characters can look forward to more powers, feats, items, paths, and destinies aimed at them, whether those are published in upcoming books or in future *D&D Insider* articles. And of course, all those options will end up in the D&D Compendium.

In addition to character options, we have a few other secrets up our sleeves to expand on the story of psionics described earlier in this column. But that'll have to be a topic for another day!

About the Authors

Mike Mearls is the Lead Designer for the Dungeons & Dragons roleplaying game. His recent credits include *H1: Keep on the Shadowfell* and *Player's Handbook II*.

Stephen Schubert works for Wizards of the Coast as the Lead Developer for the Dungeons & Dragons game. He has provided development and design work for many 4th Edition D&D products, including the *Monster Manual*, *Player's Handbook 2*, and *Monster Manual 2*.

EBERRON

BY JAMES WYATT AND KEITH BAKER

Keith: Eberron has come a long way over the last seven years. When I submitted my one-page setting proposal to the Fantasy Setting Search, the world didn't even have a name. Working with James Wyatt, Bill Slaviscek, and Chris Perkins on the original campaign setting book is one of the highlights of my professional career. Since then, dozens of designers and authors have shaped the world into its current form, not to mention the countless players and DMs who have embraced the setting and brought their own ideas to the table. Watching it grow has been an amazing experience for me.

James: Similarly, working on Eberron all those years ago was a major milestone in my career as well, second only to my work on *D&D*'s 4th Edition. I love the experience of collaborative creativity, and the Eberron design process offered so many chances to sit in a room full of smart people and bounce ideas around. It also launched my novel-writing, because so many great story ideas bounced around all those rooms that I must have caught a bug or something.

Keith: As proud a parent as I might be, I've had many regrets: things we left out of the original *Eberron Campaign Setting*; a layout that made it difficult for DMs to share the book with players who wanted to be kept in the dark about the secrets of the world. As a result, I was excited to have a second chance to get this right.

So let's look at Five Things I Like About 4E Eberron.

1. The Last War

Keith: One thing I really wanted to focus on was the impact of the Last War. For me, this is one of the vital elements of the setting, something that should flavor character background and ongoing adventures. What did your character do during the war? Did you lose family or friends, and what grudges do you hold against other nations? Are you glad the war is over (at least for the moment), or do you hunger for battle?

Beyond the personal level, we have the broader societal impact of the war: the effect on the evolution of magic, something seen in the development of the warforged and airships; the drastic shift in the balance of power between the dragonmarked houses and the monarchs of the Five Nations; the ongoing cold war and the potential for adventure within it.

The new *Eberron Campaign Guide* addresses all of these points, looking not just at the history of the war but at its impact on the present day.

James: One of my favorite parts of the *Campaign Guide* is the first chapter, which lays out the key themes of the world and helps the reader put them together into a campaign. The section on the Last War in that chapter includes some of the ideas we put in *The Forge of War*, about using flashbacks, running a historical game, or even incorporating time travel to make the Last War a vivid part of the player experience. In the sample adventure that appears at the end of the book, I put the advice we've often given into practice: The adventure starts four years before the "present day," with a flashback to the Day of Mourning. That's something we've often suggested to DMs looking to make the Last War a significant factor in the campaign, and I was pleased to be able to pull it off.

2. The Draconic Prophecy

Keith: The Draconic Prophecy is something that has always existed in the background of the setting, but many DMs have found it difficult to understand or use. One of our goals with 4E Eberron was to bring the Prophecy into the light – to explain the nature of the Prophecy and the way that it can affect a campaign.

James: The section on the Prophecy in chapter 1 incorporates material we discussed in *Dragons of Eberron*, in Keith's Dragonshards articles, and even in my novel trilogy (which is, after all, called *The Draconic Prophecies*). But this is the first time it's been in one place, a comprehensive guide to using the Prophecy as a major theme in your campaign. And we back it up with plenty of information about the major players in the world, where the Prophecy is concerned – the Chamber and the Lords of Dust.

3. Coverage

Keith: In general, we were able to provide more information on subjects that didn't get a lot of love in the original campaign setting. The Lords of Dust get half a page in the original ECS. In the *Eberron Campaign Guide*, we get an overview of their organization, their methods, descriptions of a number of the overlords, and a full writeup on one of the overlords and his rakshasa exarch. The Blood of Vol is more

accessible to PCs. Valenar, Zilargo, and Droaam all get more coverage than they have in the past. The Dungeon Delving section in chapter 1 of the ECG takes the history of the world and shows how this can affect adventurers in a very concrete way, examining the differences between a Dhakaani ruin and a fallen citadel of the Age of Demons. This sort of thing adds depth to the world, and I'm thrilled with the way it turned out.

James: In the category of "more love," I'd have to mention the maps. The *Campaign Guide* includes a drop-dead gorgeous poster map, showing Khorvaire on one side and two encounter locations on the other. The world map, all the country maps (which are sections of the poster map), and the maps of places like Sarlona, Argonnessen, and Xen'drik help make the book both visually stunning and extremely useful to the DM.

4. 4th Edition Elements

Keith: I'm pleased with the new material that we've added to the setting. The honest truth is that I've never particularly liked Eladrin. But the story of the feyspires and the Fading Dream really draws me in, and I'd like to play an eladrin just to have a connection to that plotline. I don't want to spoil any surprises for players that are reading this, but there's a number of new things that I'm itching to use in my home campaign.

James: We didn't set out to add much to the world. We didn't change the timeline or introduce any major new events. But there were a couple of changes from 3rd Edition to 4th Edition that we had to reflect in the world. Those included new character races (eladrin, dragonborn, and tieflings) and a different cosmology. We tried to incorporate these things while doing as little violence as possible to the world as originally presented, and Keith was integrally involved in all of that. You won't find a new dragonmarked house full of tieflings or dragonborn. For all three new races, the suggestion is pretty clear that they've been there all along – and in the case of both eladrin and tieflings, that's actually true. We're just giving them more of a spotlight now that they're core races for player characters in the game.

5. Legacy Material

Much of the material in the ECG is covered in other sourcebooks. *Secrets of Sarlona* has more information on that continent than the eight-page section in the ECG, and *Dragonmarked* tells you more about the dragonmarked houses. But I think the ECG does a great job of collecting the critical information and really providing a basic overview of the entire world. If you want to know everything there is to know about Argonnessen, buy *Dragons of Eberron*. But if you can't find it, the ECG provides a good map and a solid foundation to work with, both of which were missing from the original ECS.

James: A corollary to my last point, about how we tried to avoid drastic changes, is that most of the sourcebooks published for Eberron under 3rd Edition are still perfectly useful as resources for your 4th Edition game. If you find contradictions, it's safe to assume that the newer books take precedence. If you're looking for ideas, inspiration, or more information than what the *Campaign Guide* can cover, those books are a great place to turn.

Keith: There were a lot of tough decisions and debates along the way, and sacrifices were made. We don't have statistics for quori in the ECG. Given that you can't easily encounter them in the waking world, it seemed more important to focus on the Inspired and the Dreaming Dark than to devote space to the statistics of these distant spirits. But I still miss my tsucora, and I hope we'll see the quori at some point in the future.

James: They'll almost certainly appear in *D&D Insider* before too long.

Keith: Dragonmarks were a subject of considerable discussion, as outlined in a previous Design & Development article. The planes were another point of contention – how did we keep the unique flavor of Eberron's planes while making sure DMs could use materials that referenced the core cosmology of Fourth Edition?

There were some thorny issues to deal with, but ultimately I'm excited about with the results ... and looking forward to running my next game.

About the Authors

James Wyatt is the **D&D** Design Manager for Wizards of the Coast Roleplaying R&D. He was one of the lead designers for 4th Edition *D&D* and the primary author of the 4th Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*. He was one of the designers of the *Eberron Campaign Setting*, and is the author of several Eberron novels.

Keith Baker has been an avid fan of Dungeons & Dragons since grade school. His life took a dramatic turn in 2002 when he submitted the world of *Eberron* to the Wizards of the Coast Fantasy Setting Search. In addition to developing the *Eberron Campaign Setting* and *Shadows of the Last War*, he has worked for Atlas Games, Goodman Games, and Green Ronin.

Dr. Shelly's Monster

BY SHELLY MAZZANOBLE
illustrations by William O'Conner

I was about six years old when I decided to ditch my flesh-and-blood friends in favor of my indistinguishable and unfamiliar ones. I came home from school one day and asked if my three new friends could come over and play.

"Did they get permission from their mothers?" Judy asked.

I could tell she was happy I had ditched that trio of bullies I was hell-bent on chumming up with. Perhaps these new friends would even be interested in riding bikes or playing dress-up rather than watching me organize my stuffed animals by height or play with an imaginary dog.

Mom was waiting on the front porch for me (I wasn't allowed to cross the street without an adult), handed me my after-school snack (Ring Dings), and proceeded to wait 25 minutes on the porch for my new friends to show up. When they failed to appear, she offered a comforting arm around my shoulders and an extra pack of Ring Dings.

"I'm sorry, sweetie," she said. "I don't think your new friends are coming today."

I grabbed the Ring Dings box and proceeded to lay them out on the step. "What do you mean? They're right here!"

Enter Monster with the Glasses, Red Monster, Bee Monster, and an exasperated mother who rolled her eyes, shook her head, and told me she'd be in the kitchen if we needed her.

I played with my monsters for many years. I pointed out their houses on our street and could sometimes be found on Mrs. Gimble's front porch chatting up Red Monster or lying in the sun on Bee Monster's expansive front lawn. Sometimes I was Monster with the Glasses. You could tell the difference between us because MwtG (for short) would wear his frames upside down. And he always brought my mother dandelions. He was a charmer, that Monster with the Glasses.

But mostly we just hung out in my room and talked. A lot. My monster friends were a loquacious bunch. We talked about the other kids at school and what books we wanted to read when we finally knew how. We talked about my mother and my father and my brother and how I wished I had a sister, freckles, and a different name (Toby).

When my mom knocked on my bedroom door for the third time just to make sure I really was alone, I requested more Ring Dings for Monster with the Glasses and Red Monster and an apple for Bee Monster.

"It turns out he's allergic to chocolate," I explained.

My mom never told me to stop talking to myself and get some real friends. She banked on the fact that this was a phase, and like my desire to be a waitress at Friendly's, this too would pass. She did make me tell her everything I knew about my monster friends so she could write it down on a legal pad she kept in the junk drawer. She was just trying to "get to know them," she said, in case I grew up to be a serial killer. "We want to have something to aid the police when questioning you."

It wasn't until a few years ago that I finally asked her what she really wanted with those notebooks.

"The way you described that one with the glasses made him sound eerily like your father's great-uncle Fabrezio, who supposedly died in the 60s. I always thought he faked his death to get out of paying decades of bad debt. We thought he was going to kidnap you for ransom money."

"Wow, sorry to scare you like that."

"Oh, we weren't scared," she said. "He owed us a lot of money, and I was determined to collect."

Looking back, I realize two things. (OK, three if you count the fact that I am not a serial killer.)

1. My penchant for designing monsters and befriending them was most likely a result of being terrified of them. Is this not a juvenile version of "keeping your enemies close?" Pretty smart, huh?

2. Someone should have introduced me to Dungeons & Dragons a lot sooner.

"Oh god yes," Judy said, when I told her my findings. "A game you play with actual people where it's okay to talk to imaginary animals and pretend to be elves and wizards? We should have sent you to Dungeons & Dragons camp."

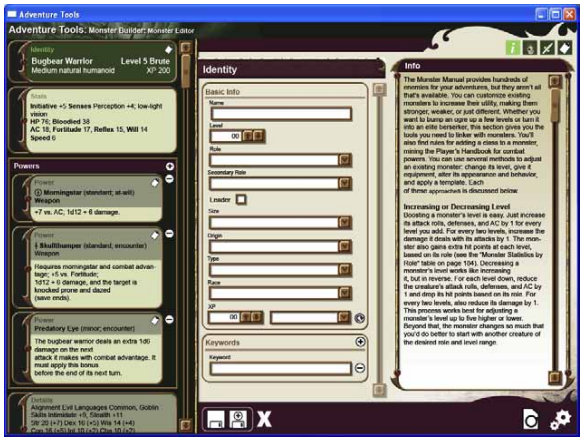
She then went on to tell me that if no such camp exists, it should, because surely there are other parents going through the same struggles I put her through.

"Look into that, would you?" she suggested. "I could be a guest speaker."

I like to think that I was a "creative" child, like a junior game designer with bellbottoms and pigtails. I'm sure many D&D players grew up with similar stories. Isn't making up monsters and characters and backstories why we like the game?

Maybe it was all the fan letters Oso de la Fez received. (And yes, I do pass them on. *That* doesn't make me feel inadequate at *all*.) But after bringing that old bear to life, I was feeling a little design happy. I was missing the days of hanging with my monster pals and was dangerously close to inviting them over to dinner.

My mom never told me to stop talking to myself and get some real friends.



Imagine my delight when in a team meeting, I heard rumblings about something called the "D&D Monster Builder." At first I thought this was a new position in R&D. What a fun job that would be.

"Who is the new Monster Builder?" I asked Scott after the meeting.

"Not who, dum-dum," he said. "What."

He went on to explain this new tool was still in development, but it promised to do for DMs what the D&D Character Builder did for PCs.

"Make it so much fun to use you kind of hope your character bites it so you can build another one?"

"Kind of."

In reality, the D&D Monster Builder is exactly what its name states: A digital tool used to customize old favorite monsters and create brand new ones.

"Custom monsters?" I asked. "Like anything you want?"

"That's the idea."

"Like maybe recreate some old friends?"

Scott shuddered. "Your friends might be too scary even for D&D."

Ignoring his last comment, I went on a mission. I needed to find this D&D Monster Builder. If anyone can come up with scary monsters, it's a woman. Like the monster that comes into your house in the middle of the night and replaces all your clothes with the same ones, only one size smaller—*EVIL*!

I sent an email to R&D informing them that the Player-in-Chief needed a D&D Monster Builder tutorial ASAP. I left off the part about how it wasn't fair to the players that I discovered its existence as it approaches beta stage. Shouldn't I be in on these developments earlier? They must still be getting used to my new role.

The weird thing was that all of R&D seemed to be taking a vacation at the same time. Or so they claimed. All, that is, except Peter Schaefer, who is thankfully susceptible to promises of baked goods in exchange for favors. He agreed to let me take over his computer during lunch one Friday and tutor me in monster design.

After the program loaded, I scanned the list of monsters from the D&D Compendium, noting several monsters were left out.

"Nothing against the work you guys have already done, but I'd like to design my own." I told Peter about my clothes-shrinking monster.

"It's like constantly struggling into jeans fresh from the dryer," I explained. "Only without that warm, fabric-scented feeling."

"The horror!"

"And she keeps chocolate chips and Heath bars in my pantry just in case Bobby Flay shows up and wants to throw down with me!"

"I'm pretty sure Kiki is insubstantial and discorporates when bloodied, ensuring that she can return to plague you another time. A monster with discorporation can only be defeated under specific, usually epic, conditions. I bet those conditions include sticking with a healthy diet or becoming a nun or something terrible."

She's like a ventriloquist who makes me shout things at waiters like goat cheese ravioli in butter cream sauce when I mean to say field green salad, dressing on the side!

"I would never let a monster like that get past development," he argued. "We need more women in the hobby, not fewer. Besides, my wife would kill me."

"*Au contraire*," I said. "That is exactly the kind of monster a woman would want to defeat."

And I'm not finished.

"What about the dysmorphic monster that casts *disguise self* right before you leave your house, causing you to think you look just fine until you get to work and realize you're wearing brown shoes with black pants."

"Oooh. Scary."

"Or a Kiki!"

Peter slapped his palm against his cheek. "Not a Kiki! Wait. What's a Kiki?"

"She's the worst!" I said. "She's like a ventriloquist who makes me shout things at waiters like *goat cheese ravioli in butter cream sauce* when I mean to say *field green salad, dressing on the side*!

"I don't want her to have discorporation! I want her to go away for good! Kiki must be defeated!"

"You must quest to discover the Kiki's weaknesses. Armed with this knowledge, you can confront her with these vulnerabilities and, should you prevail in combat, defeat the Kiki for all time."

"Or you could stat her out like a minion and let me bring her down just by giving her the stinkeye," I offered.

Peter nodded. "I guess it is supposed to be fantasy."

Oh, don't worry. I'm not going to waste my one-on-one tutorial with R&D on sissy monsters like Kiki or the clothes-shrinker. I've got bigger monsters in my stable.

"His name is Monster with the Glasses," I told Peter. "And he's badass."

"Oh, wow, a monster who wears glasses?" Peter asked. "Is he defeated by drawing a moustache on his Princess Leia poster and stuffing him in a locker?"

I hope Peter isn't speaking from experience. He does wear glasses.

"Looks can be deceiving. One might remember a cuddly circus bear in a red fez, for example?"

"Fine," Peter conceded. "It's your monster. Who am I to mock?"

Let the creation begin!

First we determine MwtG's level. I chose level 7 because I want my group take him on. His hit points are calculated automatically.

And then there's my favorite—shared astigmatism. When struck, a target can't see anything more than 2 squares away

Next we decided on his role. Because I told Peter about Bee Monster and Red Monster, he said MwtG shouldn't be a solo. Because he's also tougher than your average monster, though, we settled on making him elite.

"They're a tight-knit group, right? They probably like traveling together."

No doubt. At least that's how I've always seen them.

His origin is *natural* and, because he looks like an average guy with a monster's head, I clicked on "humanoid" under type.

Next we came to his role.

"He's very literary," I explained. Hence the glasses. "He looks like a college English professor."

"With a myopic monster head?" Peter asked.

"He wears a blazer with patches on the elbows."

"And a tweed newsboy cap."

"For sure. And he has a trusty English setter as a familiar."

"Named Rex."

"Or Othello."

"So his role," Peter said, bringing us back to the task at hand, "is determined by his power. How does he bring down his victims?"

Maybe by blowing pipe smoke in your face? I almost took out some guy outside Barnes & Noble for causing me to walk through his cloud of Burly Delight. But even secondhand smoke seems too aggressive for MwtG.

I thought of an old English professor I had who put the entire class into REM sleep just by writing Langston Hughes on the chalkboard.

"He bores you to death with bad poetry readings," I suggested. We named this power *poetry slam*.

"Ahh," Peter said. "He's a controller."

Phase one completed, we moved onto ability scores and skills. Monster with the Glasses no doubt has studied up on History. And because he was always in tune with how I felt as a kid, we gave him Insight as well.

His hit points and defenses were auto-generated based on his ability scores, but again, I had the option to customize them. Peter suggested we boost his Reflex defense, because someone with the intellect possessed by Monster with the Glasses clearly has the ability to think quickly on his feet.

"Is he resistant to anything?" Peter asked.

"Sticks and stones?" I suggested. Monster with the Glasses was the one to teach me to "p'shaw" Mara, Cara, and Tara's snarky insults. I loved those white pleather boots that they so viciously attacked. Anyway, Peter didn't think PCs use sticks and stones very often in combat. Clearly he's never seen my group play.

"Actually, it seems more appropriate that he's not resistant to anything," I suggested. "He's sensitive and scholarly."

"We should give him a ponytail that doubles as a shield," Peter suggested.

Because my monster friends were invisible but could see one another, MwtG was granted *truesight*, which gives him the ability to see invisible foes and allies up to 6 squares away.

Then we got to the real meat of my bespectacled monster pal. While his speed is normal, MwtG has studied quantum physics for many years.

"Can he teleport?" I asked.

"Absolutely," Peter said. "He should probably be able to teleport Bee Monster and Red Monster as well."

We called this *quantum tunneling*.

Peter showed me how to power up MwtG.

"This is the fun part," he promised.

Again I had the option of choosing from an a la carte menu, customizing anything from the list, or winging it on my own. It was really as simple as dragging from the power list to my personal monster menu. Knowing MtwG was going to be an illusionist, we searched the database using the key word "illusion."

"Anything you think might work, you can add to your holding pen and save it for use later," Peter explained. The holding pen is a feature of the D&D Monster Builder that is exactly what the name implies.

Monster with the Glasses was a bit unconventional already, so we opted to customize his powers using the ones from the D&D Compendium as inspiration. Anyone who's nearsighted has probably come face to doorframe on a nighttime trip to the bathroom and thought, "How did that doorframe get there?" Perhaps Monster with the Glasses put it there with his new at-will power, *quick illusion*. Not only does it deal psychic damage, but it knocks his target prone. *Rapid illusion* allows him to make two basic attacks. He is an elite monster, after all. And then there's my favorite—*shared astigmatism*. When struck, a target can't see anything more than 2 squares away until the end of Monster with the Glasses' next turn.

With that, Monster with the Glasses got added to the list of monsters in Peter's monster database, which in theory means Peter can use MwtG in future encounters he designs. I should charge him royalties. How could he not use Monster with the Glasses in every encounter?

Creating my childhood pal took about an hour, but that's only because I asked so many questions and interrupted with tales of our adventures together. I know ... poor Peter. And this was supposed to be a favor. What can I say? Creating monsters for some of us is therapeutic. Just imagine how excited my mom will be when I tell her Monster with the Glasses really exists!

"Can we do Red Monster and Bee Monster another time?" I asked, not wanting to wear out my welcome.

"Of course," Peter said, probably blinded by visions of Paula Deen's Gooey Toffee Butter Cake (a surefire way to catch a Kiki monster).

I thought of Red Monster and Bee monster and Kiki and the Shrinker and all the other monsters I could conjure just waiting to be created ... and then slaughtered by vengeful characters. OK, maybe not the first two, but Kiki's definitely on my short list. Then a most puzzling feeling flooded through my veins. Uh oh. Looks like R&D has created another monster.

Monster with the Glasses	**Level 7 Elite Controller**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 600
Initiative +4; **Senses** Perception +6; truesight	
Charming Wit aura 1; enemies grant combat advantage while in the aura.	
HP 154; **Bloodied** 77	
AC 21; **Fortitude** 18; **Reflex** 20; **Will** 19	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
⨭ **Quick Illusion** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Illusion, Psychic** +11 vs. Will; 1d6 + 5 Psychic damage and the target is knocked prone.	
⨳ **Shared Astigmatism** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Illusion, Psychic** Ranged 10; +11 vs. Will; 2d6 + 5 Psychic damage and the target cannot see anything more than 2 squares away until the end of the Monster with the Glasses' next turn.	
⨭ **Rapid Illusions** (standard; at-will) The Monster with the Glasses makes two basic attacks.	
Poetry Slam (standard; recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞)✦ **Sleep** Area burst 1 within 10 squares; +11 vs. Will; the target is slowed (save ends). First Failed Saving Throw: The target becomes unconscious (save ends).	
Quantum Tunneling (move; recharge ⁚ ⚄ ⁞⁞)✦ **Teleportation** The Monster with the Glasses and up to 2 allies within 10 squares of it can teleport up to 4 squares.	
Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** –	
Skills History +12, Insight +11	
Str 13 (+4)	**Dex** 13 (+4) **Wis** 16 (+6)
Con 13 (+4)	**Int** 19 (+7) **Cha** 16 (+6)

About the Author

Shelly Mazzanoble's mother is mortified that her daughter chooses to share these humiliating childhood snippets. She wishes to remind everyone that Shelly was raised in the 70s, when things were a lot more relaxed, and she would never get away with this crap today.

Gen Con Indy Approaches!

BY CHRIS TULACH

illustrations by Eric L. Williams

Ah, Gen Con ... The Big Show. Next month at Gen Con Indy, we'll have lots of great D&D games to play—Living Forgotten Realms, the Convention Dungeon Delve, the Ultimate Dungeon Delve, and the D&D Championship. While pre-registration for the convention is closed, you can still sign up for games on-site. Even if a ticket to the game you're looking for is sold out, show up in the Sagamore Ballroom with generic tickets and we'll see what we can do—no promises, but we try to at least get you in on a game of D&D. To get you ready for the show, we'll talk about an important rules update that will impact play at the convention and give you details on the D&D Championship!

There's way too much to see and do at Gen Con Indy for one person, but here's a short list of D&D stuff you should check out while you're there:

✦ **Hit up our booth at the exhibit hall.** Chat face-to-face with the pros, demo a game, get the skinny on upcoming releases, or pick up a copy of the new hotness. You just might be able to purchase a copy of one of our August products before it hits the shelves!

✦ **Attend one of our seminars.** We have tons of great seminars that range from product line discussions to gameplay advice to what's brewing with the RPGA. Who knows, you might even be among the first to hear a juicy tidbit about our future D&D plans!

✦ **Get in the Sagamore Ballroom, and stay for a while.** With tons of D&D play ranging from the largest shared-world campaign with Living Forgotten Realms, competitive tournament play in the D&D Championship, racing against the clock in our Convention Dungeon Delve and Ultimate Dungeon

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Delve, or just getting back to basics in our D&D For Beginners sessions, you'll never be at a loss for things to throw a twenty-sider at. In addition, you can check out the D&D Character Builder, play in a Three-Dragon Ante tournament, or play some games of D&D Miniatures run by the folks of the DDM Guild. Once you get in, it's really hard to leave—especially since the hall's open all night long!

✦ **Chat with one of us.** There will be a number of folks that work on the D&D game at the show. Wizards employees are pretty easy to spot—we're usually sporting black or black-and-white tops with the Wizards logo on them. If you see any of us hanging out, feel free to stop and say hi. We'd be glad to "talk shop" for a bit with you. I'll be there, and I'd love to talk about my character with you. I kid, I kid ...

Important Rules Update

I'm not going to retread what's been said in this article, but if you're bringing your own character to Gen Con Indy to play in the D&D Championship, Living Forgotten Realms, or the Ultimate Dungeon Delve, you need to read the news and download the updates. The D&D Character Builder and D&D Compendium will be updated on or around August 4 to account for these changes. Specifically, if you're playing (or planning on creating) a battlerager fighter, a divine class using *righteous rage of Tempus*, a fighter with the powers *dual strike* or *rain of blows*, or a warlord with *guileful switch*, you'll need to make some adjustments to your character. At the show, we will be using the most updated version of these rules elements, so heads up!

2009 D&D Championship: Shards of Galifar

The 2009 D&D Championship, playing at Gen Con Indy, requires players to create and bring their own characters to the event. This adventure is set in the exciting world of Eberron and takes the players all around Khorvaire as they compete as a team to take home the 1st place prize as D&D Champions! Unless noted below, follow all the rules as presented in the RPGA Character Creation Guide:

✦ 5-player teams with an alternate. Your team will consist of five players plus one alternate if your team wishes. Each player is responsible for creating their own character through the D&D Character Builder and bringing the printed character sheet out to the event. Only five PCs (and thus, five players) will be present at a table.

There will be a number of folks that work on the D&D game at the show.

✦ Three rounds of play with advancement. On Thursday and Friday, all players with tickets can participate in the entry round. At the end of this round of play, your team is graded on its performance and may advance to the semifinal round; if you advance, your group is assigned a specific time slot to play. The semifinal round takes place on Saturday, and teams performing well advance to the final round, to be played on Sunday morning. Once that round of play is completed, scores will be tabulated and the 2009 D&D Championship team will be crowned!

✦ Create a 2nd-level, 3rd-level, and 4th-level version of your character. Your character uses the standard 22 point-buy method. The entry round is for 2nd-level characters. If you advance to the semi-final round, you will bring a 3rd-level version of your character. For those select teams that make it to the final round, you'll bring a 4th-level version of your character.

✦ Use the D&D Character Builder. In order to create a character for the D&D Championship, you must use the D&D Character Builder. You can use the free version of the D&D Character Builder or the full version. Note that if you use the free version, you will need to make manual adjustments to your character for 4th level (the free version only covers up through 3rd-level characters).

✦ Make sure you bring your character (all versions) to the event! Character sheets must be printed out from the D&D Character Builder; we will only have a limited capability to print characters on-site. We will have pre-generated characters available, but in order to stand the best chance of success, you should create your own character.

✦ The rules options available to your character are those present on page 2 of the RPGA Character Creation Guide v.1.9 under "Player Resources." In addition, you may use all the content in the Eberron Player's Guide (including dragonmarked rules and backgrounds). This is an exception to the rules on page 2.

✦ No RPGA Rewards cards allowed. The D&D Championship does not use Rewards cards, including creation or expansion cards.

Fabulous prizes and fame await. We will have some great prizes for the winners and top places for the D&D Championship this year. In addition, there will be a contest open to all teams that make it to the final round—the team with characters judged the most "Eberron" will take home a special prize!

New Living Forgotten Realms Adventures Releasing This Month

Check out the latest adventure offerings from D&D Organized Play!

July 1, 2009

QUES1-1 Black Cloaks and Bitter Rivalries

You have haggled with the potter, you have given the coin to the stranger, and you have spared the life of an agent. Now the Zhentarim is offering you a chance to join their ranks. Darkhold and the secrets of the Black Network await for those clever and ruthless enough to infiltrate the Zhentarim. You must have the Zhentarim Infiltration Quest Card completed and in your character's stack to participate in this adventure. A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in the Western Heartlands for characters levels 7–10.

TYMA1-5 From One Dwarf to Another

When an annoying dwarf goes missing, nobody in Ruinspoke cares. Well, nobody except a fellow dwarf, that is. But it takes more than just one dwarf to mount a rescue mission ... A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in Tymanther for characters levels 1–4.

July 8, 2009

DALE1-5 Hunters' Down

Vengeance smolders in the hearts of many. It sometimes takes only a spark to flare back to an all-consuming rage. A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in the Dalelands for characters levels 7–10.

July 15, 2009

WATE1-5 Lost in the Fog

As a deep fog blankets the Crown of the North, a fish gifts the adventurers with the chance to do a good deed. Returning lost property seems like an easy task. A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in Waterdeep for characters levels 1–4.

July 22, 2009

AKAN1-5 Shell Game

A package lands in your hands, and sounds of combat are all around. Whatever is within must reach its destination, and only you can carry it there now. What do you do? A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in Akanûl for characters levels 7–10.

July 29, 2009

AGLA1-5 Silver Lining

The commander of the Watchwall is looking for adventurers for a special mission into the Tannith Mountains. The Watchwall is always undermanned and Captain Arol thinks he may have found some new recruits. But war, like politics, can make for strange bedfellows. A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in Aglarond for characters levels 1–4.

About the Author

Originally thought to have been raised from a humble Midwestern family, **Chris Tulach** actually fell to Earth in a meteorite-shaped capsule flung from a planet far outside our galaxy. While under the yellow rays of Sol, Chris's nerdity far surpasses that of any normal human. Using this precious gift only for good, he has become the **D&D** Organized Play Content Developer, responsible for the development and deployment of Dungeons & Dragons organized play programs. He is also the co-author of *E2 Kingdom of the Ghouls*.

Holidays, Fireworks, and Celebrating D&D

BY BILL SLAVICSEK

The 4th of July holiday is rapidly approaching as I write this, which means cook-outs, fireworks, and my annual viewing of the film, 1776. (It's a US of A thing. The rest of you out there in the wider world have a July 4th, you just don't necessarily celebrate anything special that day.) All this talk about celebrations has me thinking about D&D. (OK, to be fair, almost everything eventually makes me think about D&D.) So this month, I want to cover a few things that we can all celebrate related to our favorite game. There's the newly declared Dungeon Master Appreciation Month. There's the start of Debut Content this week with the unveiling of the psion. There's the 25th anniversary of Dragonlance, to which I'll add a party favor or two in the form of a preview of the draconians as they'll appear in Draconomicon: Metallic Dragons and the Monster Manual: Legendary Evils miniatures set. Oh, and there's the fast-approaching release of the D&D Monster Builder which makes me want to throw a parade. Let's get this party rolling!

Appreciate Your DM

Shelly Mazzanoble, our self-declared Player-in-Chief, has made another declaration in her newest column. She's declared that this is Dungeon Master Appreciation Month. Now, I'm all for recognizing our beloved DMs, but I do wish she'd let me do the declaring! Oh well. But I will second the notion and doubly declare that July is DM Month! We all know that a good DM is worth his or her weight in astral diamonds, and a great DM is priceless. So, to all you players out there, take a moment to show your DM some love and appreciation. They provide you with endless hours of adventure and imagination, and the game wouldn't be the same without them. They deserve a thank you, and maybe a cold beverage of their choice. They've earned it!

To all you DMs reading this, take a bow. You make D&D a great hobby and a great way to spend a few hours every time your group gets together. Personally, I love being a Dungeon Master, and I can't think of a better way to enjoy time with my friends than to explore a dungeon or battle some monsters or save the world from the latest evil to rear its terrible head. Appreciate the game. Appreciate your players. And appreciate the time you spend together in the worlds of *D&D*.

Psion Debuts

The psion player character class debuts this week on *D&D Insider*. You'll get an article explaining the class and providing commentary from the people that worked on it. You'll get a complete build, fully loaded and ready to play through the *D&D* Character Builder and *D&D* Compendium. This debut content, taken from *Player's Handbook 3* (release date: March 2010), is fully designed, developed, and edited. It's ready for publication, and we're unveiling it early—just for the use of *D&D Insiders*! The debut content plan shows the power and promise of *D&D Insider*, giving us a forum to provide our best customers with new and exciting material on a regular basis that goes beyond the scope of anything ever done in the magazines in the past. **D&D** enters real time for Insiders, where my team can finish new content and give it you to use as soon as it's ready. No need to wait for Typesetting and Printing and Shipping and all of the

Every month from now to next March, we'll provide another complete and ready to use segment from Player's Handbook 3.

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other things that need to happen to get printed products into your hands. Every month from now to next March, we'll provide another complete and ready to use segment from *Player's Handbook 3*. By the time the book hits the shelves, Insiders will have received approximately 50% of the content and will have been playing with psionics and other new elements as much as eight months before the rest of the world.

We're also turning up the volume on exclusive material, new content that will only be available to *D&D Insiders*. The revenant player character race was the start of this program, and in September the assassin player character class gets revealed. These exclusive elements become part of the game, they appear in the various *D&D* worlds, but the only way to get them to use in your game is to get them here, as an Insider.

I'll continue to hype these programs and talk more about them in the coming months, as we get closer to additional debut and exclusive content releases.

Happy 25!

The 25th anniversary celebration of the *Dragonlance* campaign world is fast approaching. Next month, the final volume in *Lost Chronicles Trilogy* by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman, *Dragons of the Hourglass Mage*, explodes on the scene. We also have a bunch of other celebratory happenings going on such as contests and an event at GenCon, as well as the debut of 4th Edition *D&D* draconians—first in the *Monster Manual: Legendary Evils* miniatures set and then in *Draconomicon: Metallic Dragons* in November. My contribution to the celebration, at least for this month, is to provide the stats for the two draconian types appearing in the minis set. Hey DMs, spice up your next encounter by throwing some of these guys into the mix!

D&D Monster Builder

Coming to *D&D Insider* in the near future, the *D&D* Monster Builder is part of a larger suite of tools we're currently referring to as *D&D* Adventure Tools. I've gotten a chance to play with the Monster Builder recently, and now I can't wait to turn it loose on the rest of you! As an ancillary to DM Appreciation Month, I can't think of a better gift for DMs than a monster building and organizing tool that actually makes building encounters easier and more fun. It not only lets you browse through more than 2,500 official *D&D* monsters, you can cut and paste whatever monsters you need into your own *D&D* documents. You can customize any of these monsters with a few keystrokes—changing statistics, increasing or decreasing its level, altering its role, replacing its powers, or even creating new powers. The Monster Builder also lets you create new monsters, and the program calculates their statistics based on the choices you made. It's amazing! Take a look at a current screen shot, and get ready to have even more fun with *D&D* monsters!

Next Time ... We get ready for GenCon, discuss a bunch of exciting new things, and reveal a few new surprises. Until then, that cheeseburger over there is calling to me. Later!

Keep playing!

Bill

DRACONIANS

Evil spellcasters and priests create cruel servitors known as draconians by using a ritual that corrupts metallic dragon eggs. The kind of draconian depends on the egg it hatched from. For instance, a gold dragon egg produces a small number of the prized aurak draconians, and a bronze dragon egg can spawn up to a dozen bozak draconians.

The transformation that changes a dragon into a draconian causes the energy transference between the dragon's heart and fundamentum to become unstable. While the draconian lives, the pumping heart keeps a dragon's elemental energy in check, but once the heart stops, the energy exponentially increases and alters the draconian's corpse. Some undergo a minor transformation, such as turning to stone, but in others the elemental forces grow so immense that they cause an explosive overload of destructive energy.

While the draconian lives, the pumping heart keeps a dragon's elemental energy in check, but once the heart stops, the energy exponentially increases and alters the draconian's corpse.

DRACONIANS AND METALLIC DRAGON EGGS

Draconian Kind	Corrupted Egg
Adamaaz	Adamantine
Aurak	Gold
Baaz	Brass
Bozak	Bronze
Ferak	Iron
Kapak	Copper
Kobaaz	Cobalt
Sivak	Silver

Aurak Draconian

Masters of the mind, aurak draconians assault their foes with psychic urgings and twisting thoughts. Aurak draconians are wingless, but they can teleport short distances.

Aurak draconians are also incredibly hard to kill. Before dying, an aurak draconian immolates itself in green flames and flies into a burning, bloody frenzy. It strikes its enemy with savage claws before finally falling.

Aurak Draconian Lore

Nature DC 14: Aurak draconians are rare. They are masters of magic that can twist the mind of a foe to do their bidding.

Nature DC 19: When an aurak draconian is killed, it is consumed by a frenzy that transforms the creature into a terrifying, fiery horror. It fights until it burns out or a particularly powerful blow finally downs the creature.

Aurak Draconian Tactics

Arrogant to the extreme, an aurak draconian guides its allies to build a defensive barrier between it and its foes. The aurak then tries to dominate the most powerful enemy, while striking at others with its *fiery blasts*. It constantly moves nearby allies to defensive and offensive positions with its *defend me!* power, while using *dimensional step* to gain a better spot on

Aurak Draconian	**Level 8 Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 350
Initiative +5	
Senses Perception +9; darkvision	
Fiery Frenzy (Fire) aura 1; only when the aurak draconian drops to 0 hit points; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 5 fire damage. See also *death frenzy*.	
HP 70; **Bloodied** 35; see also *death frenzy*	
AC 22; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 21	
Speed 6	
⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will) +13 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage.	
↛ **Fiery Blast** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire** Ranged 5; +12 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 7 fire damage.	
↛ **Mindbend** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Charm, Psychic** Ranged 10; +12 vs. Will; 1d6 + 5 psychic damage, and the target is dominated (save ends).	
Death Frenzy (when the draconian drops to 0 hit points) The draconian does not fall dead, but instead flies into a savage and fiery rage. Its *fiery frenzy* aura is activated. The draconian can make only melee basic attacks, but it deals 1d6 extra damage on those attacks. At the end of each of its turns, the draconian makes a saving throw. If it fails, it dies. It also dies if an enemy scores a critical hit against it.	
Dimensional Step (move; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Teleportation** The aurak draconian teleports 5 squares.	
Defend Me! (minor; at-will) One ally within 5 squares shifts 1 square.	
Change Shape (minor; encounter) ✦ **Polymorph** An aurak draconian can alter its physical form to appear as any Medium humanoid (see "Change Shape," *MM2* 216).	
Alignment Evil	
Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Diplomacy +13, Insight +14	
Str 13 (+5)	**Dex** 13 (+5) **Wis** 20 (+9)
Con 17 (+7)	**Int** 20 (+9) **Cha** 18 (+8)

the battlefield from which to pepper enemies with fiery death.

Once it enters its *death frenzy*, any notion of subtle tactics leaves the aurak. It spends its last actions wreaking as much havoc as possible against as many enemies as it can.

Sivak Draconian

Sivak draconians are the largest and most physically imposing draconians. Due to their large wings, sivaks are the only draconians that can truly fly. Their ability to transform into creatures they have slain makes them useful spies in civilized society.

Sivak Draconian Lore

Nature DC 14: Sivak draconians are surprisingly agile flyers, able to quickly shift their center of mass and charge foes in a manner hard to predict. They can take on the appearance of people they slay, making them excellent infiltrators.

Nature DC 19: When killed, a sivak draconian transforms into the appearance of the person that slew it. This can shock and unsettle the killer.

Sivak Draconian Tactics

Sivak draconians charge over opponents and drop into flanking positions, giving them better chances to hit with their serrated greatswords. When surrounded, a sivak draconian makes a short *leaping strike* to free itself.

Sivak Draconian	**Level 8 Skirmisher**
Large natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 350
Initiative +11	
Senses Perception +7; darkvision	
HP 90; **Bloodied** 45; see also *death mask*	
AC 22; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 19	
Speed 7, fly 7	
⸸ **Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Reach 2; +13 vs. AC; 1d12 + 6 damage.	
⸸ **Leaping Strike** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Weapon**	
The draconian shifts 3 squares and makes an attack: reach 2; +13 vs. AC; 2d12 + 6 damage.	
Death Mask (when the draconian drops to 0 hit points; targets the creature that reduced the draconian to 0 hit points) ✦ **Fear, Psychic, Polymorph**	
The draconian dies, and changes its form to that of the creature that killed it; +9 vs. Will; 2d6 + 5 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn. The draconian's body decomposes into dust after three days.	
Flying Charge	
When charging, a draconian can charge to any unoccupied space adjacent to the target, instead of just the closest space.	
Steal Appearance (immediate reaction, when the sivak draconian kills a humanoid; at-will) ✦ **Polymorph**	
The draconian alters its physical form to appear as the slain creature (see "Change Shape," *MM2* 216). The draconian can end the transformation as a minor action.	
Alignment Evil	
Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Bluff +10, Streetwise +10	
Str 18 (+8)	**Dex** 20 (+9)	**Wis** 16 (+7)
Con 18 (+8)	**Int** 12 (+5)	**Cha** 12 (+5)
Equipment plate armor, greatsword	

In Case You Don't Know Him

Bill Slavicsek's gaming life was forever changed when he discovered **Dungeons & Dragons** in 1976. He became a gaming professional in 1986 when he was hired by West End Games as an editor. He quickly added developer, designer, and creative manager to his resume, and his work helped shape the *Paranoia*, *Ghostbusters*, *Star Wars*, and *Torg* roleplaying games. He even found some time during that period to do freelance work for **D&D** 1st Edition. In 1993, Bill joined the staff of TSR, Inc. as a designer/editor. He worked on a bunch of 2nd Edition material, including products for **Core D&D**, *Dark Sun*, *Ravenloft*, and *Planescape*. In 1997, he was part of the TSR crowd that moved to Seattle to join Wizards of the Coast, and in that year he was promoted to R&D Director for **D&D**. In that position, Bill oversaw the creation of both the 3rd Edition and 4th Edition of the **D&D Roleplaying Game**. He was one of the driving forces behind the **D&D Insider** project, and he continues to oversee and lead the creative strategy and effort for **Dungeons & Dragons**.

Bill's enormous list of credits includes *Alternity*, *d20 Modern*, *d20 Star Wars*, *Pokemon Jr.*, *Eberron Campaign Setting*, the *D&D For Dummies* books, and his monthly *Ampersand* (&) column for *Dragon* Magazine.